

# The Kingdom Assignment



First United Methodist Church

Franklin, NC

Fall 2017

## *Inspiration of the Word....*

On Sunday August 27, 2017 worshipers at the First United Methodist Church, Franklin, N.C. were invited to participate in a "Kingdom Assignment". The Kingdom Assignment is a tangible expression of the Parable of the Talents found in Matthew's Gospel (25:14-30). Over 300 persons accepted the challenge and each received \$100.00 with three stipulations: 1) This is God's money 2) To use the money to somehow further the work of the Kingdom of God 3) Return 90 days later (Sunday November 26) and report the results.

The idea for the Kingdom Assignment comes from a book (2001) of the same name by the Reverend Denny Bellesi and his wife Leesa. They share in the book how they were inspired by the movie "Pay it forward" (2000) to step out in faith and lead their church in a living expression of the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30. They originally asked for 100 volunteers from their congregation and gave each a crisp, new one hundred dollar bill with the above mentioned stipulations.

In 2006 a member of the Cashiers United Methodist Church where I was serving introduced me to the book and together we approached our church leadership with the possibility of replicating the experiment. It took a year of convincing but that congregation responded and we gave 180 persons a one hundred dollar bill (we also invited two other churches to join in). God did amazing things!!

That experience inspired me to want to lead the First United Methodist Church, Franklin, NC in the same experiment! God has so blessed this congregation in its almost 200 year history and especially in the past few years. We have repeatedly surpassed our church budget and as an act of obedience and faithfulness, tithed the surplus to missions. Last year, we "paid it forward" by giving seven other United Methodist Charges a generous gift to be used to step out in faith as they saw fit as well as tithing the surplus to missions! So, the time seemed ripe to cast the idea of the Kingdom Assignment upon the waters of these blessed and obedient disciples and see what new thing God will do! And we are not disappointed!!

This booklet is the record of how God moved powerfully in the lives of the more than 300 persons who received the gift of \$100.00 (our children also received \$1000 to do the Assignment together; our youth \$5000), stepped out in prayer and faith to serve the Kingdom of God, and came back to say thank you and share all that they experienced in this Kingdom Assignment. We hope that our stories give glory and thanks to God, continue to do the work of God's Kingdom, and inspire others to step out in faith and be expectant of the "over-whelming, never-ending, reckless love of God!"

How is God calling you to accept the Kingdom Assignment? We ain't seen nothing yet!

In Christ, Reverend David Beam

## *The Word of God... The Parable of the Talents*

14 "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

16 The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. 17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18 But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20 Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

22 And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

24 Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' 26 But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents.

29 For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 30 As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Dean and Peggy Andring

Had we known David would be handing out money, we never would have gone forward on that Sunday. As we agonized over how to put God's money to good use, we prayed for guidance. Then Hurricane Harvey hit Houston, Texas with disastrous results. We personally matched God's money and sent our gifts to UMCOR for hurricane relief, knowing the gifts would be used efficiently and where most needed. After other storms caused more devastation, we felt reassured by our decision.

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Carol Angel

After giving a lot of thought to my Kingdom Assignment, I matched the \$100.00 and gave \$100.00 to UMCOR to help flood victims in Texas and the remaining \$100.00 to River of Life to help in the building of a well.

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Naomi Astling

For my Kingdom Assignment I asked for donations and got it to \$200. I gave it to my cheer coach at Franklin High School. Jennifer Turner works for REACH and she is going to buy Christmas presents for the kids in the shelter who don't usually get Christmas presents! This experience was such a blessing and really brought me closer to God and I thank everyone who made it possible for the church to pay it forward!

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Michael Barron

I actually struggled a lot when we were assigned to give out God's money that came through the church. It weighed heavily on me that, although \$100 is a lot of money, it is an amount of money that most people, including myself could actually come up with anyway. So, it was like a circular reference where I kept thinking of ideas of things to do and then got convicted that I should be doing them anyway so why did I need the church's money to begin with? \$30,000 is a lot of money, but I think almost everyone in the sanctuary that day could have come up with the \$100. So why can't we do more and bigger things for the kingdom? You get the point....

So I sat on my \$100 bill for a lot longer than my wife did (I will let her tell her stories...she says that she beat me) while I wrestled with what to do. However, I did end up making a point to be deliberately more liberal with my money in a lot of daily situations as a result. Even though we have virtually always tithed, I realized

that there is a lot more money at our disposal that could be used for God's purposes. Do I really need to go there/buy that/go out to eat?...

Finally, I had a clear indication as to what I was supposed to do with my \$100 bill. A woman at work has had a tremendously terrible run of luck (multiple deaths in the family, significant health issues, financial burdens, etc. all at once). For some reason I was led to give my kingdom assignment money to her to help her out. This was actually not as easy for me to do as you might think because she and I have not always been of the same mindset on things. But I felt very convicted and had to seriously humble myself and listen to what I was being told to do.

So, I pulled her off to the side and told her the story of where the money came from, why it was given and what the requirements were. She was genuinely appreciative, but I wasn't exactly sure what she was thinking when she left my office. I didn't think much more about it except for the occasional thought of whether it actually helped out or not.

A couple weeks later, another employee came and told me about some of the conversations that they had with that same woman. It came up that in one of the conversations, the woman had mentioned the money (I had never told anyone else about it) and where it came from and had said that there was no way that I knew how much it had meant to her at that time. Her electricity had been scheduled to be cut off that very day and the 100 dollars had been what kept her power on. It was awesome to know that I was part of her blessing and that the church and God got credit for it.

I think my take-aways are:

- 1-It's never really our money.
- 2-A lot of us have the ability to give more than we do, even if we already give a lot.
- 3-If we pay attention, we are given a lot of Kingdom Assignments regularly. The more you look for opportunities, the more you will find, the more you listen, the more you hear.
- 4-The more you give, the more you are blessed.



David and Angie Beam, and Patti McClure

Dear Hope Women's Cancer Center, Radiation Oncology, and 7th Floor Women's Center, and Franklin Infusion Center,

On Sunday August 27, 2017 we were among the worshipers at the First United Methodist Church, Franklin, NC who were invited to participate in a "Kingdom Assignment." The Kingdom Assignment is a tangible expression of the Parable of the Talents found in Matthew's Gospel (25:14-30). We are two of the 300 persons

who accepted the challenge and we each received \$100.00 with three stipulations: 1) This is God's money 2) To use the money to somehow further the work of the Kingdom of God 3) Return 90 days later (Sunday November 26) and report the results. What an amazing gift! What an opportunity! But, so many needs and how do we make a significant difference with only this \$100.00?

Well, we knew exactly what we wanted to do! Pastor David's wife Angie was diagnosed with Metastatic Breast Cancer, had surgery, and has been undergoing extensive treatments since May 25, 2017; through the Hope Women's Cancer Center in Asheville, NC. What amazing, gifted, and compassionate people you are who have helped to make a traumatic time not only bearable but blessed for us and so many others! We have been searching for a way to express our gratitude and thanks.

So, we want to say "thank you" to all of you by holding a benefit concert on Sunday December 10, 2017, beginning at 3 p.m. called "Hope on the Mountain!" We are thrilled to welcome Summer Brooke and the Mountain Faith Band (stars of America's Got Talent and one of the hottest bands in Bluegrass) and an opening act here to the sanctuary of First United Methodist Church, Franklin, NC that day! We aren't selling tickets (we can only seat 400-500 people) but we are going to take a "Love Offering" during the concert to help show our gratitude and further the work of you blessed people of the Hope Women's Cancer Center! We pray that you will be our guests and join us for the concert so that we can say thank you in person!!!

With joy and expectancy!  
David and Angie Beam and Mrs. Patti McClure

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Jane Beck

I belong to a group of interesting people that love to cook. We are from all over the world and come together on a site called "Food 52."

For the past six years they have had a holiday swap, where we submit our information and are given another Food 52 participant info to swap cookies, preserves, recipes or anything related to what we have in our little region of the world.

We also make a donation to a charity they choose for the swap and they match what you donate.

This year it is No Child Hungry. This is a great organization that feeds hungry children across America.

This is a wonderful group of friends who love to cook and love their community.

You can find out more about the community of Food 52 at [Food52.com](http://Food52.com).

Thank you for this Kingdom Assignment. I feel this was a challenge to choose something that was not only a charitable contribution but a feeling that we can actually start a change for good.

Love to my Church!

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Michelle Bell

\$100.... Not my money, but God's. Did I really want to take this assignment? This is a big responsibility, and I wasn't sure that I wanted it. But I decided to take this assignment. As I drove home from church that morning, I started to think and pray about the money. I decided that God would let me know in His time what to do. So I waited and prayed.

Then the hurricane hit Houston. The city was flooding, schools were closed, and people's homes were destroyed. Each time I turned on the TV, I saw people coming together to help the residents of Houston. I grew up in Houston and started thinking about my old neighborhood. I wondered how it was affected.

God started speaking to me. He reminded me how fortunate my school has been, and of how much support my school has received from the community. My school has been blessed by donations to be used for needy families. These donations have come with no strings except to help my students. For a week, God continued to remind me of my school's blessings. With that in mind, I wrote a letter to the principal of my childhood elementary school. In it, I told her of the Kingdom Assignment, included the newspaper article, then explained the blessings that my community had given to my students. I enclosed God's money along with my own donation, and told her that I would pray for her, her students, and staff.

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George and Nancy Bouse

We accepted your challenge of August 27 and have made the following donations:

\$100 to UMCOR for Puerto Rico flood relief  
\$100 to Religious Community Services (RCS)

Both donations were made through our home church.

This was an unusual and special challenge to us and we made these donations after considerable and prayerful thought.

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When God Spoke, Thank Goodness I Listened...

My Kingdom Assignment did not start on the Sunday when \$100 bills were handed out during the service. I was out of town that Sunday, but heard about the task given to the congregation. Russell had his \$100 bill taped to his bathroom mirror by the time I got home, and soon after everyone was talking about their plans and concerns about how they were going to use their "Assignment Money."

After several days, I decided to join in with my own contribution. Like so many others, I had no idea what to do with this assignment and how to use the money. I am terrible and uncomfortable trying to raise money and wasn't sure how to even go about it. However, it wasn't very long before things started to happen.

I received an unexpected and, if the truth be told, an unwanted check in the amount of \$100. I thought strongly about sending the check back, but I kept hearing God telling me to use it for good.

It was at this point that I decided to advance my Kingdom Assignment with found money. You know the type of unexpected money that you find in coat pockets, in the laundry, and for me, even in the mail. I still had no idea what the plan for this was, but God had a plan and he started talking. I am just not sure that I was listening at first.

I have a dear friend who always posts very positive comments and shares inspirational quotes and videos. While they are always uplifting, for a while, it seemed they were all specifically about peace and breathing. Not the kind of day-in and day-out breathing, but the deep peaceful breaths that are for relaxing and finding ourselves. The idea of peace, breath, and respite were everywhere I looked and God would whisper these words to me during my walks, as I was cooking, watching TV, reading, or going to bed. I just didn't know what to do about them. At this point I had not put the words God spoke to me with what He wanted me to do with them.

Not long after this, I was entering church for the Sunday Service and as I was doing frequently, I again asked God for direction. It was then that I heard him tell me to look around, that my answer was in front of me. I did as I was told and saw the answer. What a wonderful peace it was to finally find my direction for my Kingdom Assignment.

I set out on a mission to raise even more money for my Assignment. At this point, I had not shared the details of my plan with anyone but family, and yet I was able to raise another \$150 through hosting a luncheon for a group of friends. Acting in good faith they graciously donated to my mission without even knowing how the money would be used.

At this point, I had my direction, I had the donation, and now I just had to figure out how to present the Kingdom Assignment to my recipient. As before, God spoke again (a little louder this time) and said now. I feel like a miracle put both of us in the right place and right time.

At our meeting (to where I was giving my Kingdom Assignment funds), I told of how God kept speaking -never giving up on me even during my times of doubt in myself and when I didn't want to go out of my comfort zone. Before I finished my story, I added one more thing. For those of you who knew Betty Bragg, you know that she lived her faith on a daily basis. She was not only a friend to me and to my family, but she was a Christian mentor to me (I know that I am not alone in this). I shared about a time when Betty wanted to do something for me and I was resistant, thanking her but telling her that it was too much. Betty took my hand, looked me in the eyes and said "Rebecca, it is more blessed to give than to receive. Please do not take away from me the blessing that I get when I am able to give."

After relaying that last part of this story, I handed an envelope with my Kingdom Assignment money from Russell, from my friends, from my "found" money, and from my own funds to David. My Kingdom Assignment money was for Angie and David to use in their own way, in their own time, and in their own place to just breathe, to find some peace and respite together when they were ready. I left church that morning thanking God for making it come together, but most of my thanks were for the words that he spoke to me. I then said the one prayer that I have said many times over.

"God, thank you for making sure I listened, paid attention, and stepped out in faith."

One last thing- I felt through this whole time I was supposed to keep this story untold. God whispered the words of breathing, peace, and respite to me and through this, I felt that I should do my assignment in a whisper and not share what my Kingdom Assignment was all about. After much encouragement through several different people and God, I am telling my story in hopes that this lesson of listening and paying attention when God talks to you will be a help to you. I was blessed to be able to find the courage to write this story. May you and I both have the courage to continue to listen when God talks to us.

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Jane Bradley

I struggled with my Kingdom Assignment but finally God sent me word during my last Sunday service to give it to CaringBridge. After several conversations by email, I sent the money and their reply follows.

*Hi Jane,*

*I hope you are having a good day.  
I wanted to give you a heads up about what's coming in the rest of this year. And to thank you, again, for all you do for CaringBridge. I have been here for 14 of the 20 years we have been in existence, and what you have made possible this year is unlike anything I have ever seen.  
You inspired How We Heal, a project where CaringBridge users across the country shared what healing can look like. Since late September, words of wisdom from 20 families who have been through really tough things have already reached more than 2 million people.  
Because of people like you who share love, hope and compassion through CaringBridge, more families than ever before are coming to know the power of CaringBridge.  
So with you in mind, our holiday appeal, the most important time of year for a nonprofit, is being called the "Season of Giving and Healing."  
In a series of emails starting Nov. 28, which is the international day of giving, you'll meet families who have given, and received, gifts of healing.  
To see a sneak peek of these families who are sharing their stories of giving and healing, take a look at Ashley Gleitz's story:  
<https://www.caringbridge.org/resources/singing-brings-healing/>.  
And Chad Methum's story: <https://www.caringbridge.org/resources/healing-from-liver-transplant/>.  
Thank you, so very, very much for all your support of CaringBridge families.*

*Sincerely,*

*Kelly Espy  
Senior Development Specialist  
CaringBridge, a nonprofit organization  
2750 Blue Water Road  
Eagan, MN 55121*

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Golan and Vivian Buck

We are reporting on God's money. I (Vivian) gave mine to an elementary school to be applied to a child's lunch account where the family wasn't on free lunch but was having financial trouble – in other words, for a family that needs help but doesn't get federal assistance.

My husband Golan bought a pair of boots for a worker we had working for us who didn't have the money to buy shoes for working. Golan was so moved by the gift of the talents. It happened at the time the two hurricanes struck Texas and Florida. I made sizable contributions to each area through UMCOR, and a donation to

families in Franklin less fortunate than we. Kathryn Sellers helped me find a local use to help others with. David, thanks for the opportunity to help others.

Thanks for the opportunity to help others and further God's Kingdom.

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Chris Bullis

After reflective prayer, I identified three recipients for the kingdom gift of \$100.00.

Recalling that our Share and Serve focus was helping fight hunger in our county, a \$100.00 donation was made in the form of groceries to:

1. Teen Challenge of the Smokies
2. CareNet
3. Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers (This will surprise several hikers this next spring hiking season.)

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Diane Bullis

The morning in August that we were given our "assignment" was quite exciting. Some people knew right away what they would do. I, on the other hand, took quite some time to decide. Nothing came to me right away and I kept asking God what to do. Maybe I wasn't listening well enough. I wanted to do something dramatic or notable like concerts, parties and the like.

It was late October before I heard God say, "Your assignment doesn't have to be dramatic, just worthy." I started thinking about the families who had things in layaway for Christmas in Walmart. I was sure that there were some people who couldn't just walk in and buy what they wanted for Christmas for their children. I wanted to help make their Christmas something special.

I went in and talked with the person in charge of layaways, Christy, and she was very excited to help me. She said it was the favorite part of her job. Yes, she had heard all about the Kingdom Assignment and had also read the article in the Franklin Press. I told her that I had God's \$100 and I was adding my \$100, and hoped I could make a difference. Christy brought out the container which held all the layaway receipts in alphabetical order. She said, "You pick." I picked the very last one in the box which was the last name of Wright. The layaway was for two children's bicycles; I said BINGO!! The amount was \$215, and I was so happy to be able to pay for these two children's Christmas!

Christy said, "I will call them now if you want to stick around." When the lady answered, Christy put the call on speakerphone so we could both listen. When she

was told that her layaway was paid off, she began to cry. Christy and I both were so touched that we both had tears in our eyes.

Seems like my assignment turned out to be dramatic after all. I will be thinking about those kids on Christmas morning and know that they will have a very Merry Christmas. This makes my Christmas extra special, and I thank God for the opportunity to take part in God's Kingdom Assignment.

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Bob and Elizabeth Cabe

Concerning the \$100 gift giveaway program, Elizabeth has some close family members who are experiencing cancer and heart problems, along with stress about inadequate health insurance. We felt awkward about giving the \$100 to family members, so decided to personally double that amount to assist them financially. We have donated to the Red Cross and the WNC Conference but would have felt hypocritical not to help our relatives.

We applaud the dear FUMC members for this program and are certain many have received great blessings from your caring.

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Peter Caldwell

### **Part 1**

One Sunday when I was at church a special thing happened. Pastor David said everyone who wants a Kingdom Assignment stand against the wall. Everyone who got up out of their seats was given \$100 and was told this is god's money. Do whatever you think will help god the most with this money.

I was excited at first and wanted to give the money to someone right away. But then after a couple of days I changed my mind and wanted to really think about it and give it to someone who really needed it.

I thought and prayed about what to do with god's money and in about a month I finally decided to give the money to the Appalachian Animal Rescue Center. I did this because I really like animals and I know animal shelters are always grateful for help. This Kingdom Assignment made me feel really good that I gave \$100 to somebody who really needed it.

### **Part 2**

I met a young man when he started Cub Scouts as a first grader in the "tiger" den last spring. He is a good kid with a big heart and really seemed to enjoy scouts, but it would be difficult for his family to cover the costs for him to attend Scouts this fall. I thought about him from time to time over the summer, and when we were challenged with the kingdom assignment at church, I knew where my money needed to go. Scouting is a great organization dedicated to providing a safe and fun atmosphere for kids to learn about the outdoors, how to work together, and how to become a responsible, caring, and giving adult. I knew that keeping this young man engaged in scouts would pay dividends in the future as he grows up in

the scouting community and contributes to God's work. The \$100 from the kingdom assignment has covered his annual dues this year and allowed him to purchase a uniform. He proudly told me that he has earned his Bobcat badge already and that he is having fun in Scouts; he is now a "Wolf" Scout.

### **Part 3**

Receiving the Kingdom Assignment felt like a big responsibility. Our family prayed about it each night at bedtime and practiced moments of silence to listen. We watched for needs around the community and around the world. I saw so many needs and good causes it was difficult to choose the most important one and how could I make the money grow? My tendency was to hide the money under a rock and wait for the answer to be obvious.

God did not speak to me in a loud and booming voice and the deadline was approaching so I figured I should listen to the quieter voices in my heart and make my best guess. I often feel that I don't spend enough time helping others and I admire those that actively work to improve other people's lives. In the end I decided that supporting people I know that are doing God's work is a worthy cause. My childhood friend takes her family to Honduras each year to provide medical care, deliver medicine, and sponsor children's education. She and her husband work through the MAHEC medical teaching center in Asheville to do this work so I donated the money to that organization in their name.

The Kingdom Assignment caused me to think about our money and other blessings that I have been given in a different way. Why should that \$100 dollars be any different from the other money that we have? We should always be listening and watching for needs that we may be able to ease. We may not have the perfect answers but we should be poised to share the blessings we have been given.

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Robin and Bailey Callahan

We were thrilled that one of their first visits to FUMC was Kingdom Assignment week. As faithful Christians, we jumped at the chance to take a Kingdom assignment, even before we knew what it would involve.

Bailey's first instinct was to help hungry people. We prayed about it for several weeks, looking for the right opportunity to multiply the offering and help the most people. Finally, in early November, the right opportunity arose. We have donated the \$200 of God's money plus another \$50 from friends and family to a "Feeding America" project sponsored by the Cherokee Community Wellness Team. Robin and Bailey have ensured that God's \$250 will be matched by Food Lion and this \$500 will provide 100 food boxes for local families.

We have arranged to distribute the boxes through CareNet on December 18 (Robin's mother-in-law volunteers there.) We will send pictures and a final total for

the donation, as we are continuing to accept donations to purchase as many boxes as possible before distribution day.

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Brooks & Judy Callaway

What a powerful mountain - top experience we encountered on August 27, 2017, in the 10:55 worship service! The scripture, Matthew 25: 14-30 came ALIVE! We were challenged to use the talents our Lord and Master gave us (\$100 each), to praise and honor Him and multiply the blessing and benefit to those lives we touched. What an awesome opportunity to serve the Lord.

Judy gave her 100 talents to benefit the children served by the Florida United Methodist Children's Home(s). This ministry is active throughout the Florida Methodist Conference. I gave my 100 talents to the Lake Area Ministry (LAM) that provides a food ministry to hundreds in a three county area of Northeast Florida. LAM was established by the Keystone United Methodist Church in Keystone Heights, Florida. With a focus on non-denominational participation, we hope to maximize the effort to eliminate hunger in as wide an area as possible. LAM is staffed by all volunteers.

What a Blessing received and given. Unforgettable!

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Joan Carruth

Through my church, Skycrest United Methodist Church in Clearwater, Florida, I donated my \$100 for Hurricane Relief where needed.

I donated the matching \$100 to RCS (Religious Community Service) here in Pinellas County.

Blessings to all at First United Methodist Church of Franklin.

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Children's Ministry (Marti Patterson)

The church decided to give the children of our church \$1,000 to decide what they would like to do for their Kingdom Assignment. In August, during Children's Church, we shared the information with the children about the Kingdom Assignment and what it meant. We did a couple of activities to give the children an idea of how much \$1,000 was and what they could do with that amount of money. We taped 100 one-dollar-bills together and we stretched out into the hallway. The next time we met, Gracie Riddle wrote down all the things that the

children wanted to do and then we voted. Helping flood victims in Houston was the number one request for the children.

The next week, I contacted a friend of mine who wrote the “Oops, Your Manners Are Showing” workbooks from our manner’s class in August. Peggy Norwood lives in Katy, Texas and connected us with the “Christian Community Service Center” in Houston. While I was on vacation, I received several emails from Peggy and Stephanie at the Service Center. We emailed back and forth about their biggest need. When I returned, I contacted both of them and they were in complete agreement...diapers, wipes, night-time diapers, under jammies underwear and boy’s and girl’s underwear were their greatest needs. Our package arrived to them on Thursday, October 19, and we have already received a letter of thanks.

With our \$1000 we were able to send 15 cases of diapers of various sizes and kinds and three cases of wipes, 128 pair of underwear for girls and 128 pairs of underwear for boys in various sizes.

On Monday, October 22, the children were out of school so we met and prepared 22 Hygiene Kits and 26 Kids Kits and every kit received a card from a student in our ministry. Our kits will be mailed on Monday, October 30. There are extra cards to put with the diapers and underwear.

The Children’s Ministry is grateful that we were able to help the Christian Community Service Center in Houston.



Tom and Betty Cole

Our Kingdom Assignment using the \$200.00, and our gift of \$400.00, was sent to the Wycliffe Association for the Great Commission carried out through proven accelerated Bible translation. This group takes God's word to those isolated and persecuted language groups around the World, using the high speed Bible translation. MAST strategy (Mobilized Assisted Supporting Translation) empowers the people to do the translation themselves into their own heart language.

Sometimes their work is confiscated and destroyed by officials or extremists in regions of persecution, but through this system, a translator's work is immediately uploaded, stored, backed and protected.

This money was then matched by a larger donor from Wycliffe. Whole regions are being transformed by God's word, learning about Him and Our Lord Jesus' saving Grace. We pray God will bless this work.

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Gayle Conn

I, like everyone else on that August morning, was shocked and taken back by the \$100 gift for the Kingdom. At first I was overwhelmed and filled with doubt as to how I would be able to give this gift of God's money back, and multiply God's gift. I also prayed continually as to how this would work.

My first thought was food for the less fortunate, so I bought groceries over a few weeks shopping for BOGO items, thereby multiplying God's money to help the less fortunate. After all, I was never in need of a good meal nor were any of my children or grandchildren, and this was a need dear to me.

Then one day after the week's sermon on when we help one of the sick or poor we are helping (or in not; passing by God), I passed a family asking for help due to falling on hard times. Being skeptical on how truthful these individuals were, I passed them by and then remembered the previous week's sermon. I turned my car around and returned to them, leaving \$25 and a business card from the church that we were told about when we "pass it forward."

Also, while praying on how to help do God's work, I received a request asking for money on a "Go Fund Me" page for a friend who had surgery gone bad. The medical bills, coupled by loss of income due to lost wages, made them desperate for help. Here again, God answered prayers for need.

The next step was how to help a need for Veterans. This is a cause near and dear to me due to my son's military service. Wondering how I was going to do that, I prayed for a while and then at the last minute just happened to attend the Pumpkin Roll and saw a booth there to help the homeless Veterans. Here it was right in

front of me--the last answer to my prayer. Now neither of these last three steps were ways to double God's gift, but by donating the gift back to the church, I was doubling God's gift to me and enabling the church to do more good in missions or the food bank or any number of ways that our church helps people every day

This was such a wonderful lesson in faith and I am truly grateful for the challenge. We have returned to Florida and I won't be at church on Nov 26 to hear all the wonderful ways God has worked in everyone's life finding ways to give back to God what he has given to us, but I look forward to hearing more stories on the blog.

.....

Betty Croft

I suppose my experience with God's money isn't as dramatic as some but what I did was the right thing to do at that time. It was the week that "Harvey" hit Texas, and they were needing help desperately. I felt that God was speaking to me to send it there in order to give them a little help and comfort.

That week I sent a check for \$50, through UMCOR, to Texas. I also sent another check for \$50 to a place that is dear to my heart, St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

About a month later, when Puerto Rico was devastated by another hurricane, I felt called again and doubled my Kingdom Assignment. I sent another \$50, through UMCOR, to that area and another \$50 to Samaritans Purse, a worthy charity I believe.

Although I didn't have a plan to make a lot of money with God's \$100, I used it in a way that God was calling me to use it.

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Frank Davis

When I was given my \$100 and the guidelines for carrying out my Kingdom Assignment, my thoughts led me to two specific needs I wanted to help meet.

Since Hurricane Harvey had just hit Houston and since I used to live there and had friends there, I sent \$70.00 to Houston through Samaritans Purse. The remaining \$30.00 I sent to International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, a charity I have donated to for a long time.

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Betty Dieckmann

For my Kingdom Assignment, after some thought I decided to sew pin cushions. I'm a long-time "sewer," have beautiful fabrics in many colors, textures, and

patterns. I also have lovely, lovely vintage buttons and trims, and pin cushions are useful.

I set up shop on the dining room table. Each pin cushion went to the new owner wrapped in tissue and in a gift bag.

The Kingdom Assignment, to date, has placed in new hands 134 cushions at \$5.00 each. I have \$753 for the Western Carolina Rescue Mission in Asheville.



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Sharon Dow

It was the last Sunday in August; every church member was challenged to attend, especially that Sunday. A challenge was presented, a gauntlet was thrown: take these one hundred dollars of “Kingdom Money” (or ‘God Money’ as some of us called it) and spend it on what you feel God wants.

When the \$100 bill was placed in my hand, I heard the opening music from Mission Impossible and it has been playing in my head ever since. However, unlike Mr. Phelps, there was no tape recording explaining exactly what my mission was supposed to be! Unfortunately, like the recording that would soon self-destruct, the clock was counting down to when I would be expected to share my mission. Speaking of sharing, I shared my concern with my niece, Toni Messina, and she felt just as pressured about what to do with her Kingdom money.

But then I recalled a past sermon about reaching out to the people who are already helping the community, that they would know what the needs are. And I can’t think of any group who needs more than the homeless. That made me think of Macon New Beginnings; like the sermon said: they’re out there working with the homeless. More heartbreaking, some homeless have children; and with the holiday approaching, I had to ask myself: “How can a homeless child possibly feel the joy of Christmas?” That’s when I thought of our church’s Angel Tree. I wondered if it would be possible to add the homeless kids to our Angel Tree. So I asked Jennifer Jones and the Angel committee and they said yes!

So like Mr. Phelps, I now know my mission, but this recording will not self-destruct. It's going to keep on playing. My mission, with Toni Messina, is to include homeless kids on our church's Angel tree and our Kingdom money is going to that tree.

Now do you think the Mission Impossible music will ever stop playing in my head?  
*It's playing in yours now, isn't it?*

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Jim & Dolice Dzurus

This started out as part of my Kingdom Assignment. If I may, fifty years ago I (Jim) painted an oil portrait of Jesus. I titled it: "For You, Forever." Although Jesus is accurately acknowledged as being perfect in every way, my portrait, however, portrays a suffering Christ. For better understanding of this picture, please refer to the Old Testament of the Bible: Isaiah 53: verses 2-11. If you have not already seen this painting or a copy, they will be displayed in the church sometime in December. There were ten copies printed on canvas by Michael Rogers. Nine copies, along with the original, will be offered for sale with all proceeds to go to the church to use however needed. The one extra copy was given to my sister-in-law who donated the original. She has received the first copy along with a booklet of the ten sketches at no charge. Once again, see Mrs. Patti for details.



Steve, Cathy and Caroline Edmonds

Almost 90 days ago, First United Methodist Church of Franklin, NC challenged the congregation with a Kingdom Assignment. Three hundred people accepted the challenge and received a \$100 bill with the stipulations that:

1. This is God's money.
2. Each individual must use the money to somehow further the work of the Kingdom of God.
3. Report back in 90 days with the results.

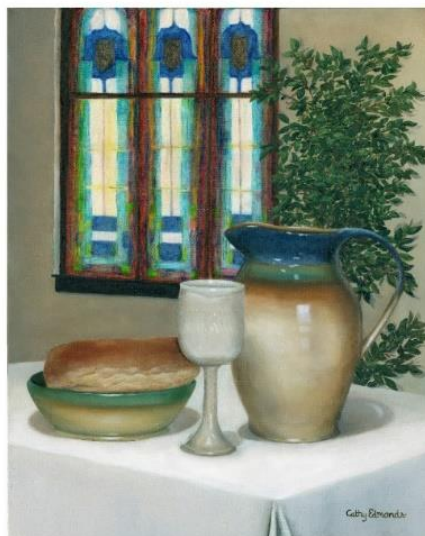
I asked myself "What will I do with what I have been given?" After lots of consideration and prayer, I decided to paint a painting. The title is "The Way to Life," and it features our communion vessels, altar table and stained glass windows.

As a family, Steve, Caroline and I, with the help of my brother Dave, reproduced it with our "Kingdom Assignment" money.

We have 25 limited editions, signed and numbered, Giclee prints on 16" x 20" canvas are for sale with a minimum donation of \$60. All monies received will be given to FUMC of Franklin to use for missions.

As of November 15, 2017, we have 15 left. The first print will be a gift to the church and Creative Framing of Franklin is donating the framing.

I hope that anyone purchasing the painting will get as much joy from it as I have in creating it. It has been a blessing.



Francye Farley

When David called us for a Kingdom Assignment, I was tired! The garden wasn't finished and I was having a few health adventures. It hadn't rained in days and all I thought of was water! I knew the Haitian people needed it more than I did.

A source of clean water is a real necessity for a society to thrive and these people are in need of many things that we take for granted. I presented the idea of our church family buying a well for Haiti. Five members have contributed so far.

I then learned of an effort to make clothes for the Haitian Children from donated fabric. Ellynn Stonebraker and I raided our fabric stashes and donated six grocery bags of fabric and trim to the effort. The clothes will be taken to Haiti and given to the children.

I invite you join my effort. God is good!

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Jean Farmer

As my old favorite children's song says, "Jesus loves the little children of the world." I knew my community contribution needed to go into the hands of children. Being from this wonderful community, I wanted my money to go to the local school system. My granddaughter currently teaches fourth grade at Lotia Valley Elementary School. She is constantly telling stories of these children who come from homes who live below the poverty line and the hardship they experience. Her daily goal is for students to feel Jesus' daily love pouring into their lives through her. One of the ways she loves doing this is by having read-aloud time. Students love to read and to hear stories that take them away and allow them to dream beyond their lives. So I gave my money to my granddaughter's classroom, where she was able to buy fifteen new picture books to read to her students. I was able to add to her book collection by contributing God's money to her classroom.

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Norm and Rose Farrell

What an awesome Sunday it was when each of the Kingdom Assignment volunteers were handed a one-hundred-dollar bill and Pastor David said, "Go out and do good." We were told that it was God's money, use the money to further the Kingdom of God and report what you did in 90 days. What a big responsibility, but with the help from God we did it!

Rose's message from God: He said take your money and use it to help little children.

While she was convinced as to what to do with her money, I wasn't. So I prayed some more. I was thinking of different things that I could do when God spoke to me. He said follow your wife's lead. I realized that by doubling our money we could do twice as much.

By this time, she had already made a phone call to East Franklin School. She said, to the person who answered her call, "I have been given some money by my church and I want to help needy children. She was transferred to an assistant, Mrs. Morris. When Rose told her about the plan the assistant said, "Someone has been praying!" She was overjoyed with our plan. She told Rose they had just been discussing how they could come up the funds to provide second graders with an afternoon snack. They have funding for breakfast and lunch but not for the afternoon and these kids don't leave the school till late. Not to mention, that some of these kids don't get that much to eat at home.

The principal set up a little ceremony with us and the second grade teachers when we presented them with our money. Rose and I felt this was a truly great way to fulfill our Kingdom assignment. The school sent us a very nice thank you card. In the card they stated that the money we gave would provide the afternoon snacks for up to eight weeks.

In addition to this we felt led to do more, so we took two hundred dollars of God's money that we retained, and gave \$100 to UMCOR for the hurricane relief and \$100 to the "New Beginning's." This is not where the story ends, although I thought it was.

When Rose contacted the local New Beginnings office, she spoke with Debbie. Rose, once again wanted to help kids and that is what she told Debbie. It turns out there is a young lady with a little girl who Debbie is working with to get her re-established in her own place. Rose felt this would be a good person to help out. This lady will need a lot of things in order to set up housekeeping.

At this time, we realized that if we are going to help this young lady we would need more money, so we made an appeal to our Sunday school class, Still Searching. We told them our story and the response was overwhelmingly in favor of helping us. The class voted to give us \$200. In addition to that money, we had additional help from Lani & Jay Fortney, who provided lots of housewares, and split the cost on some of the furniture that we purchased. Lee Gale & Sue Hirsch provided a \$100.00 Ingles gift card & kitchen ware. Rose also gave her a \$25.00 gift card.

We all were there to help the young lady move into her newly acquired apartment. She was overjoyed and totally surprised with all the things that we had provided her and now she was able to start her new life. What a blessing it was to see the expression of thanksgiving in her eyes!



### **Warning! Giving out God's money can become addictive!**

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Diane Fazioli

The Sunday we stood for the Kingdom Assignment I was shocked. As I went back to my seat, my thought was "I don't want to be a poor servant. What could I do to double or triple it? I stuck it in my purse and prayed about it.

One of my customers at Franklin Office Supply came in and asked if we could get her a new stamp. Linda said, "I've worn it out." I took the information 'The American Legion Ladies Auxiliary Post 108' and ordered her a new stamp. When Linda came to pick it up, I asked her how she had worn it out. She told me they mail out Christmas cards to service men and women, about 2000 every year. She went on to tell me she hoped they could get donations this year to help defray the cost of postage, as last year they had to pay out of their own pockets to cover the cost. As I stood there, I thought of 'God's Money' in my purse. This is where he wants me to give it. I gave to Linda and she got tears in her eyes and thanked me over and over. I told her "Thank God."

God bless our Service men and women.



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John and Isabel Fitzgerald

We have submitted a check for \$700 to go to CareNet. We each received the \$100 and added \$300 of our own funds.

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Margaret Freeman

I had the advantage of knowing about the Kingdom Assignment well in advance. However, that didn't help me deciding what to do! After much prayer and thinking about a variety of options, I decided to address a need I had heard from both within our congregation and out in the community. At a time when I am experiencing a kind of freedom as my own children are mostly out on their own, my heart was touched by the struggles of some who are grandparents having the responsibility of raising their grandchildren, either completely or partially.

In researching this need, I contacted several community organizations, all of whom said they agreed there was a growing need, but they didn't know of many resources. I felt I kept hitting a brick wall as I didn't know what I could do without resources, and I began to question whether or not this is what God was wanting me to do. After a late night time of prayer and asking God to either confirm what was on my heart, or reveal something else to me – I decided I needed to be more patient. A few days later, I heard back from several employees from Macon Program for Progress, a non-profit organization that focuses on helping children

and families in need that I currently have the blessing of serving as the chair of the Board. They had some ideas about not only some resources, but also suggestions of additional grandparents who were wanting support as they raise their grandchildren. In addition, that Sunday as I spoke to some of the grandparents in our church who are in that situation, overwhelmingly they said they were excited about whatever I was going to do to help them network and have help. I do believe that was God giving me the go ahead to pursue this!

At this point, we are planning a monthly meeting on Mondays during the lunch hour that will begin in March. Not only would it be a time of networking and mutual support, but there will be presentations from professionals in the areas the grandparents are asking for help in. In matching the \$100, I have been able to purchase books that have been recommended that will be shared among the participants. We will soon begin spreading the word out in the community to invite other grandparents to participate – and see where God leads us! I am amazed (but not surprised!) at how God has put this need on the hearts of people who can help me make it happen!

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Barbara Fry

September 11, 2017

Kerry Kinkannon, Lead Pastor  
Rising Hope Mission Church  
8220 Russell Road  
Alexandria, VA 22309

I am writing this as a tribute to my older sister Joanne Jackson. Jo passed away in Alexandria, VA in August of 2010.

Jo retired from her active career where she was serving as an advocate for children that were assigned to her by the Virginia Family courts. She had also served in the Virginia Family Court's Mediation programs.

After Jo retired, she sought out an opportunity to serve. The Lord led her to volunteer at the Rising Hope Mission Church in Alexandria, VA. Rising Hope is a Methodist Mission church serving a homeless community.

Jo recognized that many of the homeless had little or no means of formal identification. She recognized that there was an opportunity to assist homeless persons get a step back into main - stream society. With her experience as a veteran's widow and having worked extensively in the courts, she set about helping. One specific case in point was a man we call Charlie who was a Marine veteran. Jo went about working with Charlie to get him reestablished with his Veterans Discharge papers for access to VA facilities, Birth Certificate, and Social

Security Card. As a result of Jo's efforts, Charlie today has a room in an Alexandria group apartment and receives his monthly Social Security income. And we understand that Charlie often helps serve the free lunch provided for the homeless at Rising Hope.

When our pastor, David Beam, First United Methodist Church, Franklin, NC, challenged us with the "Kingdom Assignment," I immediately thought about Rising Hope and the care that they provide to the homeless.

The "Kingdom Assignment" is a program where the church gives any accepting member a \$100 bill, with the charge to go forth and do something in God's Kingdom. We are personally matching with a second \$100 for Rising Hope.

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Thomas Fry

On assignment Sunday, David's helpers ran out of \$100 bills before they reached me in the back of the church. While I have observed what my wife has decided to do with her \$100, I began to consider what I would have done with an assignment.

My first thought was to go buy about 50 pairs of socks for the homeless; or 100 pair of undershorts for the school's youngest kids; or 20--\$50 McDonald's gift cards to give to homeless persons on street corners

But then it hit me (the Lord speaking) ...Caring Bridge! We have followed our brother-in-law on Caring Bridge for 18 months of very difficult Leukemia Cancer treatments. And now we can follow the progress of Angie Beam's challenge without bothering any one.

Caring Bridge is a great free donation based resource to connect patients, their family, their caregivers, co-workers, and friends. It creates a connection to keep everyone abreast of progress with the benefit of recipients being able to respond with their encouragement and prayers...all without being intrusive to those in the daily struggle of the illness.

So it is time for me to ante up a donation to help keep Caring Bridge going, in the name of Don and Angie. My 301!

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Russ and Lee Gale

When I received the Kingdom Assignment, I wasn't sure how to use my \$100.00. I thought about it for a while and talked with my husband, Russ, who also had \$100.00. A friend who had not been in church on the day we received our

Kingdom Assignment entrusted me with another \$100.00 to use any way that I chose.

I knew that I wanted to respond to something that took me out of my comfort zone. I thought about someone who had recently shared a story about her experience of being homeless for a time. She obviously had a heart for those in need and mentioned a group that was helping those who are homeless or nearly homeless in Macon County. I thought about how uncomfortable I am when I pass those people at an intersection or on the side of the road with a handmade placard that asks for help. I wonder what it would feel like to be so desperate that I put myself out there like that and I wonder what brought them to this moment. I wonder if they have found help from anyone. I wonder how I should help or if I should help. It is hard to make eye contact with someone who is asking for something that I may not give.

I started doing some research about homelessness in America. The numbers are staggering. The reasons for homelessness and near homelessness are as varied as the people who find themselves in that situation. Children are often involved. I asked a number of people about the group my new friend had mentioned and discovered that they are doing a lot of good in our community.

I visited Macon New Beginnings to find out how they are helping those in need. Debbie spent more than an hour with me to share what they are doing and provided me with information about the homeless and near homeless in Macon County. I learned that some others had visited before me and were pursuing ideas. After finding out who those people were, I asked about joining their efforts. Russ joined with me in deciding to give our money to Macon New Beginnings. We put \$100.00 with a group of church members who were pursuing matching funds to give to this group. Another \$100.00 was used to assist a different church member who, through Macon New Beginnings, was helping a family to get into an apartment. Russ used \$100.00 of our Kingdom Assignment money to buy sweatshirts, gloves, and emergency blankets for Macon New Beginnings.

Russ and I agree that we may still feel uncomfortable when we see those people on the side of the road asking for help. We are, however, more mindful of some ways that we can offer help. We know that we want to continue to look for ways to help Macon New Beginnings, which is a group that is staffed completely by volunteers. They have community partners and have already learned ways to assist those in need. Joining their efforts, even in small ways, can help those in need in our own community. We will strive to really see every person we encounter, to offer small blessings to those in need (a cup of coffee, a gift card to a nearby fast food restaurant so someone can get out of the cold or rain for a short while, a handshake, or a smile). We are all more alike than different. The person who is homeless or nearly homeless is just like me except that I have a roof over my head and my basic needs are met every day.

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Bob and DeLanie Goldston

November 17, 2017

Our troubled, suffering world challenged our "Kingdom Assignment"  
\$200 with multiple crises.

Our hearts ache especially for friends on St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands, where September 9 Hurricane Irma (even before Maria) dealt devastating losses. Today's telephone call confirmed NO electric power yet.

We are grateful to Brandi Cook, still at work with the hospital on St. Thomas. (Brandi's parents, members of Franklin First UMC, Bob and Allison Cook, had linked us with Brandi before our May use of our timeshare week at Bluebeard's on St. Thomas.)

Hurricane Irma: hospital powered by generators...then Mash Unit set up at hospital.

Brandi continued to use her apartment although the one above her was destroyed; no electricity and only water provided by hose in cistern. Post Office and bank finally reopened with short afternoon hours and has helped us touch a few suffering human beings for our Kingdom Assignment.

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Rhonda Gray

A few days after receiving God's \$100, my husband went to Harrah's Cherokee. He came home with \$1,000 and handed it to me. I hid it in the towels in the linen closet. Day after day I prayed for God to show me what I was to do with the \$100. As I pulled a towel out to take a shower one day, ten \$100 bills came falling to the ground. I knew right then I had \$1,100 to donate to UMCOR for the US disasters. Love my Lord who shows me the way! Blessings!

.....  
Richard Griffin

Enclosed is the \$100 bill from the Kingdom Assignment as well as a matching \$100 check from me. I do not know Franklin well but I would like the funds to go to whatever group that fights hunger in the county. If this can be done within the church itself, so much the better.

I have struggled with this assignment. I attempted to make this work by assisting a client of mine who was struggling financially. She is a bus driver from Greenville County Schools. I offered her \$10 for each bus driver that I signed up to save for retirement. I already had a list of names who had expressed an interest in doing

this so she was not doing this blind. I, in turn, agreed to donate whatever I made on the client's back to the church. This did not work out; in fact, it fell on its face.

Since then I was moved by the efforts church members made in creating 30,000 meals a few weeks ago. I was not available to help that weekend. I cannot get my head around the fact that we are the richest country in the world yet we have so many go hungry. It is so wrong. I will at least do a little something toward that end.

Thanks for the assignment. I know it made all of us think about important issues that we normally do not take the time to think about.

.....

Frances Guy

August 27, 2017, was a very exciting day in the life of our church. I remember the sermon about the three servants who were given the talents and how the story ended. When David, our pastor, handed me the \$100 bill, I was awestruck. I remember repeating, "This is God's money, I will use it to further God's kingdom and I will report back in 90 days what I did with it." I also remember going back to my pew and looking at that \$100 bill and thinking, "What in the world am I going to do with this?" We were told to pray about it and let God lead us, so I left it on my desk in front of my computer. Each time I saw it, I would say, "What do you want me to do with it, God?"

The next week, Diane Bullis was out of town and she asked me to go by Gooder Grafix to pick up the nametags for the church on Friday. I was in town on Thursday and decided to go by hoping they would be ready and I wouldn't have to make a trip into town the next day. When I went in, I was met by Alicia Gooder and she said the nametags were almost ready if I could wait a few minutes. While I was waiting, I asked Alicia if she had heard what had happened at our church on Sunday. She said "No," so I told her about the 300 people who came forward and were given a \$100 bill. She quickly calculated and realized that was \$30,000. I also told her what we had to repeat. She asked me what I was planning to do with mine and I told her that I was still praying about.

I got the name tags and left and as I was driving home, I thought about some window decals I had seen at Gooder regarding the total eclipse that had happened in Franklin. Then it hit me! Window decals advertising our church. I could sell them and give the money back to the church. But..... I had been asking for new chairs for the concession booth at the bazaar, and I decided to use the money for the chairs and I will still have money left to give back to the church. However, I had no idea how much it cost to print them.

When I got home, I emailed Alicia and she said she would work with me. I went in later and Alicia made a rough sketch and then looked up the price for printing 100. She showed me her price list and it showed \$135. "But," she said, "I will do it for you for the \$100 and maybe by me doing something good for you, something good will come my way." I was excited.



I picked up my decals in a few days and started selling them for \$5 each. I have sold 73 for a total of \$365, which is more than enough to buy the chairs! I am so glad I will have money left to give back to the church.

Thanks be to God.

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Bill and Joyce Handley

Her name is Crystal. We had looked in so many directions to go with our \$100.00. A friend told me about Crystal...Mother of two teenage boys, married. Husband has left her...preferring drugs to her. He is not working steady so she has been left with unpaid utility bills. We have given it to her as winter is here and we would hate to see them without heat.

.....

Shirley Hardy

I was in church on August 27 at the 11:00 service, when the hundred dollar bills were given out. Unfortunately, you gave out of money before you got to about the 7 or 8 of us in the back corner of the church. I really wanted to be a part of the "Kingdom Assignment," so I decided to do it on my own. I thought about the project and talked to God about it, and decided to take money (God's money) out

of our bank and go shopping at the Dollar Tree Store. There, I purchased a bunch of food (canned goods, box dinners, cereal, drinks, cookies, etc.) for CareNet. With the remaining balance of cash that I had set aside, I sent a donation to one of my favorite charities, "Make a Wish" for terminally ill children.

I hope my endeavors will make a difference. Caring and giving to others in need is a wonderful, spirit-filled, joyous experience for one's heart.

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Alex and Sue Hawkins

We accepted the Kingdom Assignment and received \$100.00 each. We thought about it for about a week. We read the passage in the Bible about the landowner and his slaves and felt we needed to make this money grow somehow. Looking at many places that needed help and so many charities in Franklin, we were wondering what to do.

Then an email came from Mountain Credit Union that they would match dollar per dollar to send money to the Texas victims of the hurricane. This was before the Florida hurricane. We gave our \$200.00 to the Credit Union to send to Texas.

In November, we learned of a church member who needed help with household goods, food and repairs. We stepped up to the plate with our own money to help and again donated household goods in the same amount as we gave the bank.

The Kingdom Assignment has made us aware of what we can do to help people around us.

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Hedge and Sara Jo Hedgepeth

On Thursday of the week of August 27, Sara Jo and I attended a get-together at Faye Lansdell's house celebrating Faye's retirement as leader of the bazaar's housewares booth after all those years.

During the fellowshiping, several of us discussed the possibility of adding to and pooling the \$100 we had received the previous Sunday and searching for the people outside the church who might possibly partner with us on some project or projects to raise additional funds.

A few days later our friend Patti McClure mentioned to Sara Jo and I that her longtime friend, the manager of Mountain Faith, was working with her to hopefully have the group perform a concert in the church to help raise additional funds for the church project. However, he felt they needed to be paid a little something (\$1000.00) in lieu of their usual fee.

I then contacted some of the group from Faye's party, and they agreed to participate. We were in the process of pulling that effort together to surprise Patti, when her friend, the Mountain Faith Manager gave Patti a check to cover the cost of the concert. I advised the others in our group that the concert was covered and they turned their efforts to other possibilities.

After this generous gift to God's project by Patti's friend, Sara Jo and I, who have been blessed all our lives, pondered how to move forward. After much thought we decided to add 400 talents each to the 200 talents we received on August 27 for a total of 1000 talents. We gave the 1000 talents to Patti, designating it was to go to the Hope Women's Cancer Center.

We did this in appreciation of their work with Angie and all their patients and in loving memory of my Father and his Father, my (Grandfather) who both died of cancer. It is also in loving memory of Sara Jo's Mother and Father who both died early of strokes and my Mother who lived within a few weeks of the ripe old age of 95.

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Gracie Henry and Mary Lynn Spivey

Gracie Henry decided that she wanted to give God's money to her 3rd Grade Teacher so she could buy something she needed for the classroom.

Today we surprised the teacher by showing up before school started. Gracie, all by herself, explained that her Pastor had given everyone in church service a one-hundred-dollar bill and that it was God's money. He told everyone that they were to go out into the community and make a difference. She handed the bill to the teacher and said she could use it for something she might need for her classroom. Of course, the teacher was overwhelmed. With tears in her eyes, she said Gracie had made a wonderful start to her day.

Wow, it sure was a wonderful day for Gracie, Kim and me too (Mary Lynn Spivey).

.....

Kim Hensley

I prayed and prayed for guidance. There are so many people and places in need. What should I do with God's \$100.00? Finally, an answer...Everyone knows how much I love animals. But, would God want me to use his money to help animals? I decided, yes He would; He made the animals too!

There is a place in Franklin called the Appalachian Animal Rescue Center. It is a place where people can adopt a pet or drop off a pet that is no longer wanted. They are supported by private donations. The volunteers feed, bathe, walk and

take care of all the needs of the animals sheltered there. They always need funds to do these things. I decided to give God's money to them for things they need. By taking care of unwanted animals, I believe that they are also helping our community.

.....

Sue Hirsch

When David and Margaret gave us our Kingdom Assignment on that Sunday, I was bewildered by the idea. Everyone heard the message from their own perspective. To me, that scripture said I was to multiply the money. Sue Hirsch had to do this on her own. I couldn't think of a thing on that Sunday...what could I do? On Monday, Wes and I had a long trip to take. We are in the car; I am driving; and Wes said, "Can I listen to my CD of scripture?"

Now, if you know my husband, he loves Bible study and he loves to listen to tapes of scripture in preparation for Bible study. Me, not so much! I love Sisters and SS but that doesn't mean listening to scripture in the car. And I said, "No. We are going to talk or listen to music." On Tuesday, we had another long trip and we are again in the car. This time Wes didn't even ask about the CD. On the way home, I thought to myself...Sue you are being a jerk! So I told Wes he could listen to the CD. He quickly put in the disc. As I drove along, listening to the same scripture David had preached on that past Sunday, I felt God giving me an idea. I thought of something I could share that I valued. Now I don't usually think God talks directly to me, but it only took...5 minutes.

The idea was to publish a cookbook using the resources available to me as a minister's wife. Over 38 years, I had been able to collect really good recipes from other minister's wives, ministers, and parishioners; therefore, the name that came to me for my cookbook was *Parsonage Families Favorites*.

There is an important idea that I want you to remember from the beginning of my experience. **God cannot talk to you unless you are ready to listen.**

Now that I have completed my journey with God's \$100. I am imprinted deeply with the above lesson. You have to be ready to listen to God. When I did listen, God gave me an idea. I produced the cookbook and sold more than I dreamed possible. God spoke loudly to me through this journey: PRAY AND LISTEN!

\$100 given to a Kingdom Assignment group who donated to New Beginnings (a homeless shelter). This \$100 was doubled by the Kingdom Assignment group (local business men).

\$60 (Ingles gift card) given to a woman moving out on her own from New Beginnings. (Rose Farrell's inspiration)

\$100 given as Ingles and Wal-Mart gift certificates for a REACH survivor.

\$100 given to FUMC general budget.

\$256 given to UMCOR for Puerto Rico. (An additional \$49 will be contributed to this fund in a month's time.)

God's money has produced \$765.00.

I am praying and listening!

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Wes Hirsch

Ever since I took that \$100 bill, it has been burning a hole in my pocket. So, like the prophet Habakkuk going up into the watchtower to get an answer from God, I went out to my front porch and sat in my rocker. There I had a conversation with God that went something like this:

Wes: "Lord, I took the money. The preacher said it was your money. Now what should I do with it?"

God: "Let me ask you a few questions first. I see that you went to the bank today and got a couple of \$20 bills. Whose money is that?"

Wes (reluctantly): "Well, I guess that's your money too."

God: "Who really owns that shiny John Deere tractor that you have parked in your barn?"

Wes: "Lord, I worked 38 years as a pastor, serving you, and I saved money to buy my tractor."

God: "Do you realize how many times you said 'I' or 'my' in that one sentence? You may not remember that I didn't say much when you wanted a second barn because you didn't have a place to store that tractor. DO you remember that story in the Bible about the man who wanted to build a bigger barn to hold all of his stuff?"

Wes: "I'm painfully aware of that story, especially now. I suppose you are trying to tell me that the tractor, mower and barns are actually yours."

God: "You are beginning to get the picture. Now, who really owns that farm, house and yard you have been enjoying the last 10 years?"

Wes, warming up now: "That's easy. The bank owns half the house. The farm basically belongs to Sue, since it's been in her family for 180 years. Talk to her."

God: "Really, does she own it? I know 180 years sounds like a long time to you, but it is a blink of an eye to me. I made that farm and all of these mountains that everyone loves 180 million years ago. You are just one of the lucky ones that gets to use them for a brief while."

\*A long silence\*

Wes: "Okay, Lord. It is all yours. So, what do I do with it?"

God: "Wesley, I've finally got you where I want you. Let's figure this out together."

After my conversation with God on the front porch, some good friends did help me figure things out. First, Sue suggested that I make a whole bunch of wooden "bacon turners" or tongs to help multiply God's money.

Second, with the help of Sidney Guy, Harold Warstler, and Bob McCombs (a friend from Missouri), I made about 75 tongs.

Third, I felt called to support the "7 Habits of Happy Kids" program at Lotla Valley Elementary School.

Finally, I am glad to share that I will soon give a total of \$726.00 to help the children at Lotla Valley.

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Rachel Hoskins

\$100. Give it away.

That should be the easiest thing on Earth to do, right?

When the money comes with the caveat that it's God's money and should be used to further his kingdom, that task can become overwhelming.

Sure, there are a lot of organizations out there doing good work that are deserving of the money.

I could drop the \$100 in an envelope, match it with another \$100 and move on with my life. That would be easy for me.

But it was that second line, the part about furthering God's kingdom that made the assignment more complicated.

I'm a private person with a public life so I struggle, daily. Stepping outside my close-knit circle of family and friends is not a comfortable place for me.

I can quote a Bible verse, say a prayer in public, and talk about God's love.

What I struggle with is talking about faith and how it has impacted my life in a personal way.

For me, being a part of God's kingdom is difficult and complicated. I struggle to reconcile hurt and disappointment with love and grace. I know how hard it is to forgive and move forward without looking back. For me, love, grace and forgiveness is an on-going journey that is often filled with three steps forward and two steps back.

And in the midst of all this, there is a \$100 bill in my wallet.  
God's money. To further his kingdom.  
Giving away \$100 suddenly became very difficult.

It took six weeks and help from friends to complete my Kingdom Assignment. Along the way, I had the opportunity to share the project with friends, to pull them into the idea of making a small little corner of two young children's world a little brighter

I'd like to think the Kingdom Assignment is finished, completed, behind me. But it was never really about one task, one moment in time. It was a reminder that faith is an on-going journey that starts and ends with love and grace and the willingness to live in the kingdom, here, on Earth.

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Margaret Howard

Came home from church, ideas swirling how to use the one hundred dollars in a way to please God. Placed the bill in my Bible, began praying for God's guidance and wisdom. Many prayers each day, vivid dreams, thoughts, images of needy school children. Certainly Pastor David's sermon was a constant reminder that I wanted to be successful in the way I used the money. Even had a dream from my late husband assuring me the decision would be okay, not to worry. The following day I took the one-hundred-dollar bill to East Franklin School to be used for first grade children's need. After retiring from teaching, I volunteered there in a first grade classroom.

Since letting go of the money, I've realized this assignment opened my eyes to see more ways God wants me to respond. Like the man in front of me at the grocery store who didn't have enough money to pay for his groceries. Being more faithful to visit in the rest home and finding the rewards it brings to both them and me. Baking cookies for the staff at East Franklin School because it was Fall Festival Day. It meant they had an extra-long day. Maybe knowing someone appreciated them made it better.

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First, a confession:

Like most folks, I struggled with my plan. I wanted mine to be original, clever, and noteworthy. I put a lot of pressure on myself to do something “over the top” .... something that would make a big splash, get others to jump onboard with “Michele’s Fabulous Idea,” and well, something that I would be “proud” of. I thought and prayed for a bold, creative idea for a long while. But I never felt like God was helping me out. As you probably have guessed by now, I had missed the point! Oh, I fully intended that a great deal of good would come out of it. Then it finally hit me.... this isn’t about me at all! I have always been driven to shine when handed a task or assignment, and there I was again. How ashamed I was, when I realized my self-focused thinking was overtaking my genuine desire to help others receive God’s generosity and to give Him the glory!

Next, a plan:

With my ego under control, I thought about the blessings I have been given, and how they have changed my life. What about people who might not have these same blessings? I had a new perspective, and I truly just wanted to help others and to “further HIS Kingdom”! I stopped thinking, and trusted God to help me recognize a need that His money would help. At first, I thought about The Walk, and how I could get the members involved in a project, but then I remembered that several Walk members had also received their Kingdom Assignments that day in church. With resolved vigilance, I looked forward and outward for another opportunity.... this time with the peace that comes with humble service!

Finally, an opportunity and a mission:

About this time, I was preparing to give a talk at Angel Medical Center on The Importance of Early Detection of Breast Cancer (October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month). I am passionate on the subject because, after all, early detection saved my life! If not for diagnostic tests, my two tumors would have been unknown to exist; nothing was seen or felt even by physicians. I knew I was blessed to have had access to mammograms, ultrasounds, even an MRI. What if women did not have those benefits? I found out about a fund supported by the Ladies Night Out programs at Angel called the LNO Gap Fund, which covers the costs of such tests for women who don’t have insurance or who can’t afford them. Wow, I knew God had led me to the right place...that those funds were dispensed with Christian Love under the direction of Chaplain Bonnie Peggs and the Ladies Night Out Gap Fund. The night of my talk, I handed over God’s Hundred, matched it with my own, and have invited others to give if they are led to do so. I know, yes, I feel it in my heart, that this was my intended Kingdom Assignment. To God Be the Glory!

If anyone wants to add to the cause, you may send a check payable to: AMC LNO Gap Fund

Mail to: AMC LNO Gap Fund c/o Bonnie Peggs  
Angel Medical Center  
120 Riverview Street  
Franklin, NC 28734

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Betty Hutton

I finished my Kingdom Assignment by doing a facial and donating Mary Kay profits of \$300. I then donated through Thrivent Financial for matching funds of \$600 (Thrivent is matching funds for Hurricane Relief through Dec 31, 2017 up to \$3,000,000). The \$600 plus \$88 in Choice Dollars from Thrivent all went to Samaritans Purse for Hurricane Relief efforts.

Final result was that the \$100 bill was turned into \$688 and donated to Samaritans Purse in Boone, NC, for Hurricane Relief.

It feels great to have used some of the talents that God has blessed me with to accomplish my Kingdom Assignment. The person I supported was extremely happy to be part of this Kingdom Assignment.

At first I was nervous about taking the \$100 bill. I had never done anything like this before. After asking God what he wanted me to do with it, a clear answer came — "use the talents I have given you."

Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to see God at work so clearly through my experience with a Kingdom Assignment.

If given the chance, I would do it again.

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Gregg Hutton

Thrivent Financial set up a matching fund for disaster relief up to \$3 million. I matched the \$100 with another \$100, donated it through Thrivent Financial In Faith Community Foundation for a total of \$400 (with Thrivent matching funds) to

Samaritans Purse, plus an additional \$373.00 from my Thrivent Choice to UMCOR.

This resulted in a total of \$773 to disaster relief.

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Joe, April, Isabella, Emily and Olivia Innis

The Kingdom Assignment was quite a surprise. One that makes you see things a little differently.

I had a hard time trying to figure out what to do with this gift. I was so afraid of being like the servant who buried the Master's coins. I couldn't think of anything on my own, so I prayed. At the time of the Assignment, Hurricane Irma had flooded Houston. My oldest daughter and I thought about it, and we felt compelled to use our gift for the city where so many were hurting. I wanted to make the gift go further or multiply so I donated it to the Red Cross through Google who offered to match donations.

I felt good once we had done this, but I still didn't feel that I did enough or maybe I jumped too soon and should have used the gift differently, especially when I heard of how some other members had used their gift. I thought, "Why didn't I think of that?!" Then I feel like God was trying to get me to understand that this was just the beginning of the assignment. That even though I had already given what was given to me that morning at church, it didn't mean that I couldn't keep giving of what God had given to me. So I started seeing other opportunities to give or other situations where help was needed. One example was a company that helps provide insulin and other diabetes management supplies to areas affected by natural disasters or war or poverty. I thought of my 4-year-old who can't survive without these things and how would we care for her if we lost everything. I have more ideas in the works as well. I hope to keep this going. So in a way, even though my initial gift wasn't very creative or original, I feel like the gift has been multiplied because it has inspired me to constantly seek opportunities to give.

I am grateful to Franklin FUMC for this opportunity. It was a valuable lesson and a needed wake up call. Thank you!

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David and Melinda Jones

Melinda and I were moved by the work of RISE AGAINST HUNGER and made a combined contribution of \$500 from God's money and ours.

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Dick and Melissa Jones

Our greatest benefit from the "Mission Assignment" has been making us aware of the conditions – the problems – the lives of others.

We have used our \$200 jointly in making the following, hopefully, effective donations – though perhaps not changes in the financial condition of the church, but small changes in people’s lives.

Together we have---

- . Contributed \$200 to UMCOR
- . Contributed \$100 to the St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital
- . Contributed \$500 to the Laura Jones Scholarship Fund
- . Taken sugar, corn meal and canned goods to the Little Grocery in front of Ace Hardware
- . Made it possible for two of our friends who were going through rough times to get a massage
- . Given ten coats to REACH
- . Taken a name tag off the “Giving Tree”
- . Will support, with our contribution of \$200, the benefit for the Hope Cancer Center.

What a blessing this has been!

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Jennifer Jones

I prayed and thought about what I’d do with my \$100. There had been so many causes that popped up in my Facebook feed... and this God money prompted me to give \$100 to a friend whose family had experienced a catastrophic motor vehicle accident, and then \$100 to Harvey flood victims, and then another \$100 to someone who I knew would use it to be a blessing to others. I wondered if I was ever going to get the word from God to stop giving money away!

Finally, God showed me what to do with the actual \$100 bill. So, I took it to the bank and split into two \$50 bills. Then, I bought two copies of Mr. Rogers’ book of “Important Things to Remember.” Then, I wrote two letters to two different families with two little elementary children each, telling them about the God money, put the \$50 bills in the books, wrapped them up as presents, and delivered them. And then I waited... expectantly. I knew that those parents had generous hearts willing to teach their children how to bless others—I just had to have faith that it would work.

When I saw the parents and kids, I didn’t let on that I had sent the books... I wanted to see what would happen. In a couple of days, the father was the first one to approach me to say that the kids were super excited to receive the Kingdom Assignment. These children thought and thought about what to do, coming up with several great ideas and options. Ultimately, they set up a Go Fund Me page to benefit the local Paws4Life animal shelter. They were more expectant than most adults—they set a goal of \$1000! So far, they have raised \$150 in

addition to their \$50. The second grader plans to volunteer at the shelter. I've shared their post to my Facebook timeline, and you can go to there to donate, too.

With the second family, I received these messages throughout the Assignment:

We had originally planned to donate to XXX (an overseas mission to sponsor a child), but then decided that at their age, something tangible might be more memorable. We made two Operation Christmas Child gifts with them! The girls really put a lot of thought into the items they picked for their boxes and had fun buying things for others. It was a sweet experience to walk with them and I know it made an impact.

We really appreciated that you looked at our girls and knew that they would love the opportunity to be generous. My husband and I are both generous people, and we want to foster that in our children. We were so pleasantly surprised by the challenge to do something kind for others with this assignment and to be given some resources to do so. Watching the girls carefully think about the gifts they were getting for their shoeboxes was priceless and I know it made a huge impact on their hearts.

So, they tagged me in six photos and two videos in which they assembled the boxes, made special cards, and individually prayed over the boxes—totally cute! I've added the photos and videos to my Facebook timeline so you too can experience the “joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart!”

First of all, God always gives us the capacity to share and be blessings to others much more than we believe or can comprehend. We all have different special gifts to give; no matter how big or small, these things matter greatly to the receiver and the giver. We simply must trust and share; then we will truly serve and love.

Secondly, God can and does use everyone—young or old, happy or sad, rich or poor, faith-filled or full of doubt—to bless others in ways that are true to the deepest parts of our being. I'm thankful for this Kingdom Assignment opportunity, and it was really fun to see how the kids would use their God money. Despite the negativity that we see on a daily basis in our world, I am really hopeful that this has planted seeds that will continue to blossom over time for each of those youngsters.

Finally, it's funny how our dreams and goals really shrink as we get older. We get jaded, more cynical, and less hope-filled as we age and experience life's adversities. We tend to focus on the negative and our own short-comings. I was amazed at the trust and faith of these little children—and their excitement and expectancy. What more can we all do if we just believe? I pray that I can keep this in mind and answer whatever call God has in store for me next.

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Jack Lansford

After praying on the Kingdom Assignment for several days, I was brought to an awareness of all of the devastation in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean. The devastation seemed to be so wide spread that I determined to use UMCOR for my primary Kingdom focus. I added \$400 to the \$100 received for the Kingdom Assignment and sent the \$500 to UMCOR. This proved to only be the beginning, however. A discussion of the Kingdom Assignment at our weekly Sunday evening dinner drew a great deal of interest from our children. Upon noting their interest and excitement, I decided to give each of them \$100 to do their own Kingdom Assignment. They all have reported back on how the funds were used in God's Kingdom, and I am surprised at the diversity of projects.

One daughter provided assistance to a lady at the supermarket who did not have sufficient funds for groceries and rent. A son-in-law came in contact with a family during an emergency medical call. The mother did not survive and left a grief-stricken father and 8-year-old son, with medical bills and no money for funeral expenses. He gave \$200 to this family to help them with immediate expenses. Our other son and his girlfriend came into contact with a woman through work who had no heat and could not pay for furnace repairs. They gave their \$200 to help repair her furnace.

From the initial \$100 seed money, \$1,000 was used to do good in God's Kingdom. All of our children indicated that they were enlightened by all of the need in our community once they had eyes to see.

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Susie Ledford

I knew what I wanted to do for my Kingdom Assignment from the beginning. We had all been devastated by Angie's news and there were several other members of our congregation going through cancer treatments as well. I wanted to do something that would honor them and show them our love and support...something that would show our unity in prayer for them.

I recalled that when my sister had cancer in 2009 our friends and family wore elastic "hope" bracelets to show our support for her. That's what I wanted for us to do for Angie and the others. But when I tried to order them online I found out that they were no longer available, so I had to look for a product that was similar and affordable. I found the small pink elastic bracelets for the ladies and lapel pins for the men.

Next, I had to decide what to do with the money that I would raise from donations for the bracelets and pins. At first I considered giving it to our Missions effort at church, but later I found out about a charity called LoveLights. LoveLights Foundation assists cancer patients with travel expenses to and from treatments,

with medication expenses and even with other things like home heating costs. How hard it must be to be given a cancer diagnosis, but can you imagine the fear of not being able to afford travel to and from treatments or medicine? So it seemed fitting to donate what I raised to the LoveLight Foundation. I will make a local donation, so that residents of Macon County can benefit from our donation.

During the 90 days of my Kingdom Assignment, over and over, again and again, I found myself saying, "Thank you Lord!" He answered my many prayers and clearly showed me that he approved of my project and wanted to help! So I am proud to say that He and I together raised \$600 for the LoveLight Compassion Foundation. That donation will be given in honor of Angie Beam and the others at our church who are suffering from cancer.

During the Kingdom Assignment, God showed me what kind, loving, generous people I am surrounded by in our church. I was blessed by your willingness to help and by all of your awesome donations. I am deeply grateful to each of you and I love you all.

We will wear our bracelets and pins in the coming months to show our continued prayers. If there is anyone who did not receive a bracelet or pin let me know...I have more!

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Kathy Leedom

I was able to buy two dog crates and a bag of dog food for the Appalachian Animal Shelter.

The crates are either used at the shelter, given to new owners or used to relocate dogs for better chances at adoption.

I matched the offer and donated to Wells in Haiti, UMCOR for hurricane relief, and Global Animals, which helps in rescue and reuniting animals in the Harvey relief efforts.

This project helped us to pray more and focus on God's work in the world and how we are affected by the process. This was the true gift to us.

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Paul, Angie & Helen Martin

Words seem inadequate to describe what our family has experienced from the Kingdom Assignment. "Awe" might be the best word to sum up our feeling about the Kingdom Assignment. We are in awe of God and how He acts. During the past few months we have become more aware of His presence in our lives and in others' lives. We have learned how our actions that might seem small to us can

make a big impact on others. We have also seen how these small actions fit into God's bigger story.

On Friday August 25, just before the Kingdom Assignment was given to our congregation, someone asked Paul for money. Paul listened to this person's story. \$100 was the amount needed. Paul gave \$200 to the person. Can you imagine how surprised our family was on Sunday, August 27? \$200 was given away and less than 48 hours later our family received \$300 to further God's Kingdom! We were in awe of how God provides.

Our family chose to give the money we received from the Kingdom Assignment to the I Write My Story Foundation, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, to help a family who lost their home to a fire, and to fund supplies for students who lack basic necessities. God also provided us with the funds to help others when we became aware of their needs. We were in awe of how God connects people at the right time and place to fulfill needs. At times we wonder about God's timing but when we look back we are reminded, He is right on time!

When Angie gave her \$100 to the I Write My Story Foundation, she was concerned that she did not make that \$100 grow into something bigger. However, she learned that God made it into something bigger. Her donation was just the beginning. It led to a \$300 donation, a \$200 donation, a \$500 grant and another donation of \$800. Sandra McMahan, founder of I Write My Story Foundation, described Angie's \$100 as being like the story of the fishes and loaves of bread. Details from I Write My Story Foundation leave us saying "Wow!" Look how God worked and what he did. Again, we are in awe of how God worked through all these people and what He provided!

We are thankful for God and the ways He provides. We are especially thankful for the way He worked through each person who helped bring the Kingdom Assignment opportunity to our congregation. We are more expectant now. We wonder what is God going to do next? We can't wait to see, and we know we will be in awe of what He does.

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Jim and Glenda Martin

Jim and I were thinking about what to do with the \$200 we received from Franklin FUMC. We went to our home in Huntsville, AL, for the month of September and had a man come and do some yard work for us. Our neighbor had used this man before and said he was good. He worked all day in the 95-degree heat for \$10 an hour. We fed him lunch and gave him water and had a chance to talk to him. He is the sole support for a large family, including several aunts and cousins. He said they don't have enough to eat. We decided to use some of our money to buy him food. I went to Aldi and spent \$50 on staple food items (beans, rice, cornmeal,

sugar, etc.). We sent him home with a trunk full of food. We are glad God sent him our way!

The remainder of our money was sent to UMCOR for hurricane relief.

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Patti McClure

On Sunday, August 27, 2017, when that \$100 bill was placed in my hand, I couldn't believe what in the world our pastor, David Beam, was thinking of. How in the world was I being roped into this Kingdom Assignment!? What in the world would I do with this \$100 bill?

My tiny brain had a lot of thinking about how I could make a difference in something or someone's life. I went home and told Sam what happened in church this morning. Then I read Matthew, Chapter 25:14-30 again. I had work to do.

Sam and I immediately donated \$200 to the Hand-in-Hand Hurricane Relief Fund. But I was still holding that \$100 bill. Who could I help with that brand new bill? My tiny brain came up with the most fantastic idea! I knew a wonderful old black lady in my home town, eight hours away. This lady cannot read or write and rode a bicycle all over Weldon cleaning houses until about three years ago. She is now 78 years old. Sam and I went to Weldon, my hometown. We took this lady out to lunch; and when we took her home, I handed her the \$100 bill. I can't describe the expression on her face. She was overwhelmed and so was I. All I can say is "God is good."

Since Pastor David and I teamed up to raise money for the Hope Women's Cancer Center in Asheville, I needed to get my tiny brain to work again. I asked several people for donations and they happily donated. As of now, we have \$1,400; and donations are still coming in.

My last Kingdom Assignment task was...I ordered 100 lovely ball point pens to advertise "Hope on the Mountain", which will take place on Sunday, December 10, 2017. Susan Simmons helped on this assignment. These pens are engraved: Pastor David Beam, KINGDOM ASSIGNMENT, "Hope on the Mountain", December 10, 2017. They are \$5 each and a wonderful souvenir! The money goes to Hope Women's Cancer Center. This was a surprise for David. Hasn't this been one of the most unusual things that any have ever participated in; and hasn't it changed your life in a wonderful way!

P.S. An absolutely wonderful childhood friend of mine (Dr. Frank Barham) is paying for Mountain Faith who will be entertaining folks. He sent me a check for \$999 and told me to add \$1 and that would cover their expenses! What an assignment this has been!!! My heart has been filled with joy from this wonderful

Kingdom Assignment. And thanks especially to Dr. Barham for helping with our Kingdom Assignment. God is Good. Amen.

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Jean McCollum

Being a very conservative person, I had doubts about the wisdom of giving away \$30,000. But since I realized that the assigned task of our leadership team is to lead, I trusted their judgment. The events of the past months have shown their wisdom and inspiration in asking us to do something a little beyond our comfort zones.

Because I wanted to support a local cause, my choice for the Kingdom Assignment \$100.00 is the Community Care Clinic. I admire the volunteers there, some of whom are members of FUMC. I know they will use the money well.

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Tom McCollum

My choice for my Kingdom Assignment funds is the Shop With A Cop project of the local law enforcement agencies headed up by the Macon County Sheriff's Department. My \$100.00 assignment funds were increased to \$200.00 by my personal funds.

The project brings much happiness to local children who do not have much to be happy about during the Christmas season. The project also provides their parent(s) with some relief from their embarrassment of not being able to afford some gifts at Christmas.

The project doesn't dwell on the Santa Claus theme. Rather it teaches the children about giving and sharing along with the happy time of being allowed to make purchases for themselves and others with an emphasis on necessary things and not just toys.

Just to see the gleam in the eyes of the children and the relief in the parent(s) eyes, as reported and seen in the local newspapers, makes me proud for carrying out my KINGDOM ASSIGNMENT this way.

Thank you, First United Methodist Church.

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Barry McKently

So I had my moment today, when I got the message from God as exactly what to do with HIS money. The story started weeks ago when I had decided to use my

money to double God's \$100 and buy five \$40.00 Ingles gift cards. That idea came when the new Ingles opened and the store was packed. Happy to see a real selection of meats and fish, I stood in line. Nobody was moving. Many were looking at the beautiful display. After asking a few folks in front of me if they had been helped, I learned that half of them said "No, I will be buying some chicken; so just go ahead". Then I realized the Care Net (food bank) can't supply perishables such a meats or dairy. So yesterday I set out to buy the five gift cards, but my car was failing...warning lights etc.

I wisely made it to Meineke Car Care. During my wait, I saw a photo of a teenager but could not read what it said. I thought, "Gosh I hope it is not a missing person thing." They eventually told me that I would need to return today because they needed to spend several hours on my car. So today after waiting for three hours, I again saw that photo, with little interest to get up and read it. Then they told me I could not drive my car, and they needed it through tomorrow; and the estimate for the repair was \$700. I was upset and feeling sorry for myself. I even said "S - - T" loud enough for others waiting for their cars to hear. But I was at the counter and took that very moment to read the words on the small poster..." Fundraiser for 16-year old Franklin HS student Kayla Arnold who is in stage 3 lymphoma at Children's Hospital in Asheville; caretaker is her Grandmother." Well, I got the message and it hurt to know I was ranting over something so worldly. I left quietly when Lexie picked me up.

On Monday I will deliver a \$200 check to her family doctor who is one of the organizers with a simple note that says "God loves you and will be with you all the way."

Thank you, Margaret and David, for giving me the opportunity for some pruning.

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Doug McMichael

My name is Amy Bardi and my grandparents were good friends with Doug. We were all so sad about his passing. Before he passed away, he wanted to use the \$100 bill from your church Kingdom Assignment to impact vulnerable women in Zambia through the organization that I founded...Clothed in Hope (clothedinhope.org). He matched the \$100 and donated \$200.

We were so touched at the legacy he chose to leave...one of generosity, kindness, compassion and faith. I just wanted you to know how his \$100 was used. Vulnerable women in Zambia will get to learn life-skills of sewing and business in order to break the cycle of poverty in their families through HOPE and empowerment. Lives are being changed 8,231 miles away from your church!

.....

Brenda McSwain

After much agonizing, I have finally completed my Kingdom Assignment. On 10/10/17 I gave \$500.00 to Kids Place, \$200.00 from my purse and \$200.00 from my brother Edgar Taylor who lives in Charlotte.

Once I explained the Assignment and what Kids Place does, he immediately opened his wallet.

It's amazing how far reaching this project has been. Edgar said to tell you that David Beam is now his hero!

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Michael and Charlie McSwain

Charlie McSwain, knew immediately what she was going to do when she received her \$100.

Charlie loves animals and her heart goes out to the ones who are sick, injured, or unwanted. Her mom, Michelle, gave Charlie her \$100 and Charlie then added \$50 dollars to the fund from her piggy bank – money that she was saving to buy a bunny rabbit.

Armed with \$250, she got permission from K-Mart to set up a table outside their door and, via a sign, pledged to match any public donation up to \$250. In early October, she was able to donate \$750 to Noah's Ark Humane Society's Angel Fund! The organization takes in animals from the police and injured animals, makes them well, and tries to place them. They also do free vet work for animals whose owners cannot afford it. Animals are very important to many people. I am impressed with the granddaughter, but even more impressed by the generosity of so many people. It restores my faith in humankind!

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Michelle McSwain

I stood up in church that day not knowing what to expect. Truth be told, I stood because my daughter, Charlie, did -- without hesitation -- and I didn't want to disappoint her. When David handed each of us \$100 and explained the assignment, I felt that money as a burden, as yet another thing I had to do. Charlie, though, was elated: "I'm going to use my money to help animals!" she said -- again without any hesitation or second thoughts. I, on the other hand, agonized over what to do with the money. A friend of mine, David, had killed himself just a few days earlier, so I considered using it for suicide prevention or perhaps donating it to the National Kidney Foundation because he had suffered from kidney disease. But I just couldn't decide. Then, at his memorial, I had a conversation with his sister, who mentioned the only thing David loved as much as

his family, his students, and Tennessee football was his dog, Chester, who was old and blind and deaf but his best friend nevertheless. I told Charlie I would go in with her.



So then we had to decide how to multiply our talents. We went to several businesses in town until we found one, Kmart, willing to let us solicit money outside their doors. Charlie broke open her piggy bank and took all the cash I had in my purse. We had \$250. One Saturday morning, we set up a table outside Kmart with a big poster we made that promised we would match any donation made to Noah's Ark Humane Society's Angel Fund that day. Charlie greeted everyone who went in and handed out a flyer explaining what we were doing. Thank goodness I thought to add, at the last minute, "up to \$250" to the bottom of the poster. By the end of the day, we had \$750 to give to Noah's Ark Humane Society. And it didn't stop there: Noah's Ark shared Charlie's story on its Facebook page which inspired even more donations.

This was a transformative experience for me. I have been very unhappy with the world of late – with Washington, with Raleigh, with things at my job, with the education system, and on and on. The crazy, sneaky, amazing thing this assignment did was make me look at my world differently: yes, I had to think about what was wrong in my community, but then I had to think about what I could do about it. That \$100 bill obliged me to do something. Then, at the end, looking back at what had happened, I realized, "Well, shoot, why don't I do something all the time?"

Thank you for this opportunity.

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Laura Metz

I was stunned by receiving \$100 for the Kingdom Assignment at FUMC. God gave me an immediate answer, the Pregnancy Resource Center in Franklin. I had attended a previous fundraiser for them at the Bloemsma Barn. I must confess I only attended the benefit to see 'Mountain Faith' perform, and that was my last thought of the Pregnancy Resource Center.

Funny that it came to my mind first thing during church that morning. Later as all the hurricanes hit Texas & Florida my mind kept saying, "You should probably donate that money to hurricane victims." However, when I prayed about that, my mind kept showing me the mountains around here. That told me it should stay here, and I went to visit the Pregnancy Resource Center. I learned all about how they work there to benefit women and their children.

When I gave them the cash, they were so surprised. I would love to do more for them, and I'm sure I will. They were very grateful. I found out that aside from a few grants they write and sometimes receive, they are mostly supported by local churches and caring townsfolk. What a great group!

Bless you all as you make decisions on how to spend God's money. I feel blessed too.

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Irma Mason and Marty Miller

We hosted a bridge luncheon with donations going to Florida Hurricane Relief. Our donation amounted to \$337.

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Maree Milliner

I was overwhelmed by receiving the \$100 on Kingdom Assignment Sunday. After lunch I sat down to relax a few minutes, and I turned on the TV. All I could see on the screen was \$100 in big numbers and under it, it said 150 books called Power to Change could be bought for \$100. The message went on to say that the churches in Russia were closed again. Putin had passed laws to try to shut down the churches. He already would not allow any books or printed material to be brought into Russia, but he had not closed down the printing press in Russia, and these books could be printed and given out there. The churches wanted to get as many books as they could. When a person requested a book, the church workers would not mail it to them but would take it in person so they could witness to that person. Then they would follow up on another visit later. Many people were being changed, and the churches were really growing. The law now said the churches there could have only 50 members, and the church would have to hire security agents and put up metal detectors at church entrances. Since the churches cannot

afford to pay for these expensive security measures, this is the Russian government's way of crushing them financially.

I have decided to use my \$100 to buy 150 copies of Power to Change for distribution in Russia. I will never know how many lives will be changed by these books, but it says in Luke 15:7 – “There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents.”

My prayer is that there will be much rejoicing in heaven.

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Joni Mitchell

Due to the interruption of a hurricane and then a flash flood at our park in Florida, we were not able to do the idea we had originally planned. We did donate the \$100 to Heifer International during one of their matching funds campaign so the money was doubled.

We are still dealing with the after effects of these two natural disasters.

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Rick and Pam Moninghoff

I just completed the Kingdom Assignment and I wanted to share the story with you. At first I was troubled by the huge responsibility that \$100 bill represented. It seemed like a lot to handle. I didn't want to fail. So I prayed and I watched for something, for God to show me what to do. I was nervous... kept thinking about the wailing and gnashing of teeth.

There was no bolt of heavenly lightning. But slowly a thought began to grow. I love children and believe in education and I realized I was going to do something in that area. I looked some more. Prayed some more. I asked Katie (currently student teaching at an elementary school in Durham) to see if there were any fund raisers planned for the near future at her school. She didn't find anything. So I broadened my perspective. Was her school planning a book fair? Kids always need more money than they had at a book fair. And we love to read. It was perfect. But Katie didn't know when the book fair was going to be held and we had only a few weeks left to complete the assignment. I kept praying but I wasn't as nervous. I began to trust that God would help me.

At the same time that I thought of little children and school, I realized I wanted to give back to FUMC in some way but I couldn't just put the money back into the offering plate. David said it could not come back to the church. So I decided to match my God money with my own funds. I began giving more each Sunday to the Laura Jones Scholarship (a fund I have always supported). That was also

supporting education. I gave an extra \$100 -- match completed -- but still could not see what to do with the original money.

I began to lose focus. I wasn't thinking as much about my God money. It was still in my wallet but it was getting lost. Then the lightning bolt hit.

Last Friday one of my co-workers casually mentioned she gave her daughter \$5 but she still did not have enough to buy the book she wanted at the book fair. Boom! Book fairs were going on now! Right here in Macon County! God wasn't letting me forget. Another co-worker said her school had already had their book fair and I panicked. It was too late. I had procrastinated and I was going to be in trouble. Wailing.... Gnashing.... Teeth...

But I went out on Macon County School's website and looked up East Franklin Elementary, the school where all three of my children went. It was the place where they learned to love reading and the very site of many book fairs where they NEVER had enough to buy all the books they wanted (we have a lot of books in my house). I looked for the phone number.

And right there on the website was a little announcement that the Scholastic Book Fair would be coming Friday, October 27th. Boom! More lightning! Thunder! I looked for a contact and discovered the media coordinator was Lynda Elliott, a dear friend from the past whose family had joined us in Scouting for many years. Our boys grew up together. Lynda and Dewey were great people with strong Christian values. Whoa!!! Are you kidding me? I had no idea Lynda even worked there. Do you realize how perfectly this was coming together? There was no doubt in my mind now... God has this planned.

I emailed Lynda and told her I would like to donate to the book fair. I explained the Kingdom Assignment and all of the interventions that had led to this moment. She was excited to learn I had looked online and said she was so glad she had put the announcement out there. She almost didn't but by now we know better. It wasn't even a surprise to hear her say that. Of course she agreed to help. How could she not? God has this planned...

So mine (and Rick's because he really liked the idea too) God money will be used to help children buy books at East Franklin's Book Fair. Maybe a student will be a dollar short. Maybe another won't bring any money from home. Maybe there isn't any money for a book fair. Lynda will help all of them until the funds are gone. This will help a lot of children! Although it will all be done anonymously, I wish I could see their faces when she tells them it will be ok if they are short a quarter.

I will have to step up my contributions to the Laura Jones Scholarship until I match Rick's God money but we have 30 days to get that done. Plenty of time. I know God has this planned...

I can see so clearly now. I realize how foolish it was to worry. There were so many parts and pieces to this Kingdom Assignment and they all fell perfectly into place. Right when they were supposed to. The seeds first planted...the worries...the dead ends... they were part of the process but in the end, it was perfect. My coworker... the website... Lynda... I know God knew exactly how this would work out. My faith journey? I'm more confident than ever in it. There will be times when things look bad. There will be dead ends and worries. But in the end, it will be exactly as it should be. Perfect. I know more than ever...God has this planned....

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Doug and Chris Morton

I had an opportunity to read an article in the Macon News about decreased funding for the county library. It described that the library, as a result, had to decrease hours so they could decrease staff to save money. I have always supported libraries and believe them important to the life of a community. I remember as a child how important our library was to me. I read my way through the children's library and wanted more reading and learning opportunities. My mother took me to our library and gave permission for me to borrow books from the adult library. I kept reading books at a higher level, thus increasing my knowledge, view of the world, and my vocabulary and spelling knowledge. I carried an A+ average through school and my nursing education. I feel that the opportunity I had in the library supported my ability to maintain that average and gave me a lifelong insatiable appetite for reading and the knowledge it provided me. After I retired I volunteered at our local library and saw that same appetite in others and was able to answer questions about many of the books they were seeking.

So when I read the funding straits the Macon County library was in, I thought and prayed about that being an acceptable use of God's money. I went and talked to the staff members to verify the situation. They had decreased their hours and staff resulting in a decrease of services they could offer. The staff was really disturbed by this. I saw that the Children's Department was having to cut back on some of the craft programs for lack of funds to pay for supplies. I made another visit to the library to talk to the manager of the Children's Department and verified their situation. She also described some other things they were unable to offer to the children that were an incentive to them to come to the library. Attractions such as their gerbils and aquarium fish...seemingly unimportant items for a library but important teaching tools and life affirmations and an opportunity to experience some of God's creatures and nature.

I also felt as though the staff appreciated being remembered and not forgotten. Before my final decision, I brought in some Christmas ornaments as they had mentioned they could use some newer ones as the ones they had were showing their age. Their response affirmed the staff's depressed feelings. I prayed and

reviewed what I had learned about their predicament and realized that this community was in need in a unique way. So I used God 's money to bring joy to the staff, help them fulfill their responsibilities to the community, and create the environment to support the love of learning that supports the ability of the members to fulfill their dreams of the future.

I have visited several times since donating to them. They have purchased four gerbils and more aquarium fish. I also brought them some ornaments for the children's tree. I wish I could be here at Christmas to see their decorations. Doug came with me when I made the donation and saw and heard their appreciation and need. So he also decided to donate his Kingdom Assignment there, which enabled them to obtain the supplies needed for the craft program.

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Pamela Munoz

I was very surprised when I was handed a \$100 bill in church on August 27, 2017. I was also excited about the possibilities. I took God's money and tripled it by selling a phone on E-bay. I spent \$100 on a little girl whose name was on our Angel Tree at work. I loved shopping for her and remembered how special Christmas was when I was five years old.

I wasn't sure what to do with the rest of God's money, but then a couple of weeks ago an employee at my work had an accident with a table saw and lost fingers along with other damage to his hand. I knew I had to help them. He is the main breadwinner and the bills will start to pile up quickly. He will probably be out of work for a few months. I really enjoyed helping them.

My Kingdom Assignment has taught me to look at the needs of others and that no matter how small, I can make a difference. I will never forget this experience. I am blessed to have found Franklin FUMC.

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Nan Noyes

When our grandson visits us here in Franklin, we always take advantage of the children's services at the Macon County Library. Thus I was well aware of their needs and was led to multiply the \$100 by adding personal funds and made a donation in support of the children's programs at the Library.

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Larry Noyes

Nan and I have vacationed in the Caribbean for many years - often on Vieques, Puerto Rico, a small island just east of the main island of Puerto Rico - and most

recently on a Celebrity cruise which had several ports cancelled and replaced twice due to hurricane devastation. Thus I was led to provide support to Caribbean hurricane victims by multiplying the \$100 by first adding personal funds and then by taking advantage of Celebrity Cruise's generous program in which they match our funds and provide hurricane support through World Vision International.

It was a wonderful prayerful experience.

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Kathy Paige-Griffin

Pastor David,

I would like the money from the Kingdom Assignment to go toward Missions in Macon County, hopefully two-fold: sharing the Gospel and feeding the hungry! Thank you again for challenging us with the Kingdom Assignment! As you said this morning, I will never forget this event! It was and will continue to have amazing results!

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Marti Patterson and Dee Schendel

While Dee and I were at the Sydney airport in Australia, we met a group of girls from SCEGGS Darlinghurst, New South Wales, Australia. They were waiting for their flight to Cambodia as part of the Global Village Team with Habitat for Humanity, Australia. The girls, 53 of them, were going there for nine days to build four houses on top of foundations which had been prepared for them. Each of the girls raised their own travel and resource money. This was their first mission with Habitat for Humanity, Australia but not their first mission trip. We admired the girls' excitement and commitment to take on this building task.

After meeting the director, Keith, and carrying our Kingdom Assignment money with us to Australia, we decided to give our money to Keith and his team. We prayed for Keith as the leader and for his team. He, no doubt, was surprised to meet two unknown ladies with a \$200 gift for their project.

Below is the thank you letter we received.

*Dear Marti,*

*Thank you for your email correspondence under.*

*Our Habitat for Humanity build trip to Siem Reap, Cambodia, was a great success. We managed to complete the four houses we set out to build.*

*The trip was without incident and we had no sickness in our large group of 53 members.*

*The generous donation you gave to me at Sydney airport was handed over to Habitat for Humanity on the last day of the build. The money will be used in the village for the highest priority need. The team will follow up with me what it will be used directly for.*

*They have a few hand pumps servicing wells not working that supply water to the village that require maintenance.*

*We appreciate your thoughts and prayers for our team. We were certainly blessed with safety, dry weather to complete the build and a life changing experience for many of the team.*

*I have attached a few photos from our build for you to share with your congregation, if you so choose.*

*The photos show the handing over ceremony, the completed house and also some of the recipients of the house.*

*Thank you once again for your generous donation, prayer and follow up. It is greatly appreciated.*

*Kind Regards,*

*Keith Stevenson*

*Facilities Manager*

*p 02 9332 1133 | m 0477 371 651*

*SCEGGS Darlinghurst | 215 Forbes Street Darlinghurst NSW 2010*

*[www.sceggs.nsw.edu.au](http://www.sceggs.nsw.edu.au)*



Sissy Pattillo, Sue Moore,  
Linda and Gene Morrow,  
Roberta and Wayne Swank,  
Dan and Linda Tyler,  
Lee Gale, and Joann Clark

Ours was a group effort which came together after a lot of discussion, research and, yes, pleas and prayers for guidance. We wanted to give to an organization or group we had not helped before, and we hoped we could find a cause that would help men, women and children in our community who are in great need. We knew our church was working with Macon New Beginnings to assist the homeless and decided to learn all we could about this group's work. Impressed with all this small group of volunteers has been able to accomplish in two short years, we made our decision to try to help them help others.

We chose to pool God's money in order to make what we hoped would make a sizable donation possible. We started with \$900 which came from the \$100 bills given to us in church. Three of us decided to match our \$100, bringing the total to \$1200.

It was then that our FUMC "Fundraiser Extraordinaire," Ms. Patti McClure, suggested we contact business partners, Jacky Jones and Bob Crawford, to see if they might want to join us in our efforts. That we did. We told them about the Kingdom Assignment, and without any hesitation they matched our \$1200. This, plus a late contribution of a \$100 Kingdom Assignment bill from a member of our

group and a \$100 gift from Dan Tyler's best friend, gave us a total of \$2600, which was given to Macon New Beginnings.

We plan to stay in touch with New Beginnings, offering our time whenever we can. If you are interested in helping individuals in crisis or about to be in crisis, please google "Macon New Beginnings" to read about what they are doing. There are many ways we can all help, and your eyes, like ours, will be amazed at the many needs this volunteer group is trying to meet.

Thank you, Pastors David and Margaret, for helping us open our eyes to the needs around us and for helping us to use God's money wisely through our Kingdom Assignments. We are also thankful that we were lucky enough to find businessmen so willing to help us. They made it possible for us to practically double our donation. We have been moved by the generosity of those around us and feel blessed to have taken part in the Kingdom Assignment along with so many others in our church and community.

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Rocky and Pam Pattillo

My husband Rocky and I held onto our money for a few weeks, trying to decide what we could contribute our money to, so that it counts for something important – something big. For me personally, it was burning a hole in my wallet. I wasn't comfortable carrying around a \$100 bill. We prayed for a purpose to which we could contribute our money. I don't know why we didn't think of it immediately, but the first weekend in October was a fundraiser for Men's Teen Challenge of the Smokies. The fundraiser, Hunter's Mountain Ride and Poker Run, is now an annual event held in honor and memory of my nephew, Hunter. Because of this, the fundraiser is near and dear to the hearts of my family members. Rocky and I put our money together, and more than matched it with our own donation. This was a reminder that it's all God's money. In addition, we encouraged others to participate in the fundraising event, to raise money for Men's Teen Challenge. This faith-based drug rehabilitation program is a 12-month journey for men 18 to 50, dedicated to helping them kick an addiction. It operates ultimately on donations from the community. This year, we raised several thousand dollars through Hunter's Mountain Ride.

The Kingdom Assignment has reminded us that there are so many opportunities for giving and helping others. How could we pick one? We considered our donation to Men's Teen Challenge to be one of many. Giving shouldn't stop with one need. And it doesn't have to be big. Giving is, or should be, a part of our everyday lives...a part of our personal financial planning/budgeting. But giving also shouldn't be limited to financial. Our time, talents, and spiritual gifts are just as important to give as money. In some ways, it's easier to hand over money and be on our way. This has been a reminder for us that we work too much. We don't give

enough of our time to others around us who are in need – random acts of kindness, paying it forward. This is not just about money, but about human connections. We have been blessed

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Pat and Donna Patton

While we were astounded to receive the Kingdom Assignment, there was never any doubt or hesitation about what we would do: give help to a local young person. Matt (not his real name) is a student at Macon Early College. He lives with his mother, who is unemployed. They have no transportation and move frequently. Matt is quiet, polite and a good student in spite of his situation. A school official said he is pretty much raising himself. His school clothes were sweatpants and well-worn sneakers. He needed help, so we took him shopping with our kingdom assignment money. He told us that he had never had any new clothes. So we bought two pairs of jeans, four shirts, a sweater, tennis shoes, winter coat and personal items. He didn't even have a toothbrush. As we drove him home that day, his face was beaming with a smile that was worth more than the money. I think it was the first time anyone had done anything for him. A follow up with the school indicated that Matt was doing well now. We are blessed to have been able to help him. And we will continue our help. Thank you to our Church Leaders for making this possible.

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Mary Pittman

Let me start by saying that I love to hear Wes Hirsch talk about his conversations with God while he's sitting on his front porch. The ease with which he carries on conversations with Him is inspiring. I think that during the Kingdom Assignment I may have found my "front porch."

When we received our assignment and got a \$100.00 bill, the thing that stuck with me was that I needed to increase the amount in some way, not just give it away. I did think about taking it to Texas with me when I went on a mission trip there and see if I could find someone who desperately needed it, but that wouldn't multiply the amount. It seemed to me like the easy way out.

I stashed my \$100.00 in a hiding spot under a basket in my bedroom. Every once in a while it would, mysteriously, peek out from under the basket so I would see it and remember that I needed to do something with it...but what?? Also, every once in a while, I would say a quick prayer about what to do with it.

As I drive over the mountain in the mornings, I often pray about the day, my family, for patience with people and acceptance of circumstances in my life. I don't suppose I ever stopped to really listen.

On the Sunday that Wes talked about his Kingdom Assignment, as I started driving up the mountain toward home, it suddenly came to me that maybe I should have a conversation with God, like Wes does. I turned off the radio and thought "OK God, I'm listening, I need some guidance about my Kingdom Assignment and that \$100.00 bill that keeps peeking out at me. I truly believe that God led my thoughts towards Macon Early College and the students I knew there who need help in so many ways. How about a fund for them, for the adults at school to use when a child is in need? How about asking the staff to contribute to the fund as well? It was like a light bulb had gone off. I was excited that I had thought of something but was more excited that I felt a connection to God that sometimes is missing and I felt his presence. Maybe I need to listen more. Maybe I need to take the time to converse with Him, and maybe driving up the mountain, surrounded by God's beauty and majesty, is my "front porch."

So, I met with the staff at MEC, gave them the money and asked if any of them would like to contribute to the fund. I'm done, right? But then I thought about other people who, like me, used to work at Early College but have moved on for one reason or another. And I began wondering if they would just use the money until it was gone and then that would be the end of it. Looks like there is more work to be done.

I made some phone calls and there has been another \$400.00 contributed to the fund. I am meeting again with the staff at MEC to talk about a plan for how to use the funds,

Who decides when there is a need and how it will be distributed? The Student Council sponsor is going to talk with that group about the possibility of having students contribute or do a fundraiser for the fund. I'm excited about where this will go.

OK God, so you don't expect me to do a good deed and quit?

Lessons learned: Listen to God, be open to what He is saying, be engaged and keep working to further His Kingdom.

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Dean and Janet Player

A mother, her four children and their grandmother came to our county to escape an abusive situation. They had to put all their belongings in a storage unit as they had no home here initially. Unable to afford to pay the storage unit rent

consistently, they got behind on what they owed to get their things back. For four years, they missed their belongings. We used our Kingdom Assignment money to help them retrieve these items. It took two trips with two cars and a trailer to empty the storage unit --- 50 miles one way. "It was like Christmas for two days" as they sorted through the bins, bags, boxes and furniture.

Janet: In addition to the gratification of seeing them happier and seeing Christian love at work, I came to realize that we take so many things for granted... and that we should do more to help those who need our love and help.

Dean: Being God's hands to bring joy and relief to a family in need has given me a greater sense of need all around us and our ability to make a difference.

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Barb Putman

The Kingdom assignment came at the perfect time for me. For a couple of weeks prior, a need had been tugging at my heart and I wasn't sure what I was going to do about it. As soon as I took the Kingdom assignment, I felt that I knew what I should do. I did want to be sure that it was what God wanted me to do, too, so I decided to pray about it for a week before committing. During that time, three incidents occurred that showed me that God wanted his money directed toward this cause.

At Southwestern Community College, we serve students from 16 to 96 from all walks of life, all ability levels, all academic backgrounds, and all income levels, but the majority of our students struggle financially in one way or another while they try to achieve a college credential to improve their career prospects. Over half of our students qualify for federal Pell grant and many of the families earn less than the federal poverty level. The Pell grant is necessary, but not sufficient, for many students to survive on while they attend college. The other half of our students who don't qualify for financial aid include many families who struggle to put food on the table and pay rent while paying for tuition and books. Very often, students are living on such a tight margin that just one blown tire or an unexpectedly high power bill can set them back so much that they have to step-out of college in order to work extra hours or get a second (or third) job.

Southwestern's Foundation manages a small student emergency fund from which students can apply for a small grant (up to \$250) to cover an unexpected expense. The fund isn't large, but the needs are growing. I had been considering donating to the fund, but there was a part of me that said, "Students should manage their money better" and "They should qualify for aid if the need is that great."

The day after the Kingdom Assignment, I heard from a faculty member about a student in need of funds to purchase a textbook until her parents got paid in two weeks. The student was going to try to survive in the class by borrowing a book, but nowadays, so much of the homework is online that students fall behind very quickly if they don't have the electronic access code in addition to the text. In this case, the code cost \$100, which was just beyond the family's budget. The choice for the student was to figure out a way to secure the code or to drop the required class to take it in the future. I referred her to the Emergency Fund application and the student was successful in making her case and received the money for the code the next day. The student wrote a heartfelt thank you note to the instructor indicating how excited she was to continue with the class and how encouraged she was that her teacher and the college cared enough about her to help her fill this gap. She assured the instructor that she would honor the grant by doing well in the class, and she has.

This incident touched my heart, but even though I was the one that had made the referral to the emergency fund, I still had that back-of-my-mind question about whether this was the right investment for my Kingdom assignment.

Well, I didn't have to wait long to get a firm answer. The very next week, two additional faculty members, brought forward two different student situations. I referred them to the Emergency Fund and these students also qualified for assistance. Applications are evaluated by a committee which considers the rationale for the request, other options the student may have for assistance, and the urgent nature of the request as related to continued enrollment in college. Each of the cases shared with me this fall received support from the fund and the students have continued their enrollment and have expressed gratitude for the vital role of the emergency funds in allowing them to continue in college.

In all the years that the college has had the emergency fund, I have never needed to make so many referrals to it in such a short time frame. So, after prayerful consideration and a little nudge from God, I decided that I would give \$100 of God's money and match it with \$100. I am also increasing my annual giving with a designation for the fund. Even though we don't usually talk about this sort of private giving in public (at the college), I pushed through my nervousness and shared this with about 20 colleagues during a meeting, not to boast about the donation, but to encourage others to consider the good cause of the student emergency fund. I don't know if anyone else has donated as a result, but several colleagues have asked for more information, so I take that as a good sign that God may be touching their hearts as well.

Thank you for the blessing of the Kingdom assignment. It has had a direct impact on numerous people, including me, and the ripple effect of helping students achieve their educational goals will have lasting effects on their families and our community for generations to come.

Blessings!

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James Putman

I was excited to accept the Kingdom Assignment. I was very thoughtful about what God might want done with the money and considered several options, including helping a homeless person, helping children who need clothes or supplies for school, and helping find a cure for cancer. I discussed it with Mom and prayed about it daily for a few weeks and we settled on the cancer research cause. I know and love so many people who have been impacted by cancer including Ms. Angie, Ms. Michelle, Ms. Judy and so many of the other loving, kind people at our church. I also know that my Granny and great-aunt are cancer survivors and I am grateful that they had the right treatments available at the right time. I feel really strongly about supporting research for improved treatments and cures. Mom and I researched cancer-related organizations and found that The Cancer Research Institute has a strong reputation and at least 85% of donations to CRI go directly toward cutting-edge research into immunotherapies and cures. When I learned about Giving Tuesday and the Gates Foundation's matching pledge, we set up a Facebook fundraiser and made a video to encourage family and friends to join me in a donation to this worthy cause. Mom and I are so pleased that, thanks to the generosity of our Facebook family, God's money has been multiplied and my fundraiser earned \$515 for the Cancer Research Institute.

Praise God!

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Mary Quigley

I was so impressed by the weekly blog posts of members sharing the way they chose to give their \$100 to glorify God, help others, and further the Kingdom here on earth. And each week I would think, "I wish I had thought of that!", but still felt confused about what to do with my \$100 bill. For over a month I was attuned to needs - here in Franklin, in Atlanta where I spend a lot of time, news reports of suffering in our country and throughout the world. But I never had an 'aha' moment, so I decided to donate to the Unsponsored Children Fund at Compassion International. I have sponsored a little girl in Ethiopia for over six years, with monthly financial support, prayers, letters, cards, and small gifts. (When I find a letter or photo from her in my mailbox it makes me so happy!) I know that through Compassion she receives nutrition for not only her body, but for her mind and spirit as well. So, starting with the \$100 from church, I added enough for two more children to participate in the program for six months. They will get food, health care, lessons in reading and math, hygiene training, and an opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus' love for them. While I wish I had thought of something more

creative or clever for my Kingdom Assignment, the Compassion program addresses a concern that is so close to my heart - helping young children get off to a good start in life before so many of the chronic problems associated with poverty and lack of opportunity develop.

Thank you to the church council for your willingness to challenge us this way. It changed my perspective on how I can respond to whatever needs I see - not out of obligation, but with a heart full of gratitude for the abundance of gifts I so often take for granted.

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Theresa and Joe Ramsey, Dottie Coone, Carol & Bill Messina

Like many of you, we tossed around several ideas trying to find that one special, unique opportunity to use our gift of God's money. The burden that we chose was a bit overwhelming and definitely thought provoking.

Desiring to share fun, food and fellowship while raising funds for local, state and international missions, we came up with the idea to host a Bunco Bonanza Fundraiser – "On a Roll for Missions"! Together, armed with support from family, friends and many of you, the \$500 God money we received grew to \$3,220 which enabled us to support Missions, specifically, \$875 for CareNet, \$1,145 for UMCOR hurricane disaster relief and \$775 toward a well in Haiti. By soliciting donations from a few businesses along with various items personally purchased or provided by our group, \$425 from Silent Auction proceeds was given to FUMC in memory of Ruth O'Bryan (whose Celebration of Life Service was held on the day of our event).

This kingdom assignment challenged us to look at giving in a new, different way as we opened our hearts to the needs of others. In the end, our Kingdom Assignment was quite a success - we had lots of fun and fellowship and we surpassed our goal in the amount raised for missions. But let's be clear - for us the assignment wasn't about the bottom line, it was about the joy and experience of working together to share God's love as we dug deeper into our personal lives to discover the true meaning of giving.

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Bill and Jackie Rennie

Jackie and I knew that something special was about to happen as Pastor David went all out in promoting church attendance on that August Sunday. We had to be away on that date, but it didn't take long for the news about the "Kingdom Assignment" to reach us. We would like to believe that our absence made it

possible for two others to receive the cash and be drawn into this thought provoking challenge. After some discussions and prayer, we reminded ourselves that all of our money is God's money and that we wanted to be a part of the assignment.

As others have shared, husbands and wives may have different ideas and approaches to this assignment. We do share some passions for causes, but at the same time we either have different approaches or really want to pursue our own avenues of help. Like others, the assignment really impacted our thoughts, prayers, conversations and final actions.

I spent a lot of time investigating both known and some unknown needs locally, including Kids' Place, Hospice, Veterans organizations, various Children's Programs, and animal care services. Jackie and I were both drawn to identifying an unmet need or niche where the 100 dollars would have an impact or make a difference.

So where did we end up? For Jackie it was donating to Noah's Ark Angel Fund, which helps to provide emergency help to needy or indigent pet owners, or orphan pets who are simply dropped off at the vet's door. For me it was providing food and comfort products to the Macon County Animal Services, which is under extreme funding pressures. For the purpose of our assignment, our decisions are consistent with what the scriptures say about what God expects of us in treating his animal creations. To show love, care, and compassion for all of them.

Finally, for us, this assignment is not over, but just beginning. By going through this spiritually stimulating and awaking experience, we look forward to using what we have learned to further the Kingdom Assignment, not only in Franklin, but in our Florida community.

Pastor David might soon be getting a text or call from our Oakhurst UMC Pastor Tim. Look at what you have started, Pastor!

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Kelly Roberts

After much prayer and watching and waiting for the opportunity that I felt like God was leading me to, I entered into my Kingdom Assignment. Last week I had seen where the Gates foundation was matching funds on this giving Tuesday (Nov 28) and had thought that would provide the direction I was looking for. Over the weekend a company whose goal it is to feed children, ran a promotion. They normally will feed ten children with your purchase but they doubled it this weekend. I used my 100 dollars and fed 60 children through their program. Not only that, but they are sending merchandise which I plan to sell and give the

proceeds to CareNet. The company provides meals for children in the US as well as the world and also provides fair trade jobs to women in Peru.

This assignment increased my awareness of the abundance the Lord provides and how important stewardship really is.

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Anne Rolfe

My plan was to help the Animal Shelter and the Animal Control as much as possible. I own several cats and dogs to feed and care for and have found a wonderful variety and supply of food at a good price at the Dollar General stores.

I got an advertisement from the Franklin Press for things needed for the care of these homeless animals and did as much as I could with my \$100 bill.

I purchased two large bags of dry dog food, one large bag of adult cat food, two smaller bags of kitten chow, one large bag of kitty litter, two scoops for the litter, six tall cans of wet dog food, six tall cans of wet cat food, one bag of puppy pads, and two stainless steel water bowls. I also bought various items needed for the shelter to keep it clean.

With the help of their want ad, I made full use of the \$100 and brought much-needed items to the animal shelter.

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Mary Lou Rollins

I was not at church when the Kingdom Assignments were handed out. Robert and I were out of town for ten days. I had read about the surprise in the newsletter and asked several people if they knew what it could be. I only found out about it after returning home but did not act on it.

However, I got an invitation to a Bunco party from several of the participants' intent on adding to their Kingdom money. I joined in and donated.

Then I saw a beautiful little pin cushion that Betty was making to donate to the Kingdom Assignment. I bought one of these. Patti McClure called and explained what she was doing. Now I have a nice pen with Pastor David's name inscribed on it, along with other information.

But the defining moment came on Wednesday night before Thanksgiving. Robert and I had gone to Dairy Queen for a quick bite to eat after working most of the afternoon at the barn taking care of the horses. As we were enjoying our meal, I noticed a man with about a ten-year-old little girl walking into the parking lot. A customer and his wife were just pulling into the parking lot to come in for ice

cream. The husband stopped and talked with the man and little girl. The husband came on in and joined his wife for ice cream. He also ordered two meals for the man and little girl. They sat on the bench just outside of where Robert and I were. The little girl kept turning around and looking inside at me. I asked the wife about her husband's conversation with the man outside. She said they had a place to stay for the night but, otherwise, were homeless. The man and little girl came in to eat their meals. I talked briefly with the man. I keep a little money (\$100) in my billfold for emergencies. I gave it to them. Now I have participated in the Kingdom Assignment after all. I truly feel Macon County needs a shelter for everyone, not just for the abused and for men.

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Vance and Rachel Sanders

Vance and I were, unfortunately, at a memorial service for a friend in Chapel Hill on the Sunday that the Kingdom Assignment started. Despite this, we witnessed the excitement in everyone when they told us about that Sunday service.

We decided to use our own money in order to participate. After much thought, we decided to contribute \$200 to help the hurricane victims. The event was matching the amount donated so essentially it was \$400. It felt good to help in a small way. In another incident, we didn't increase the amount but we definitely felt good about it. A couple in front of us at the grocery store didn't have enough money to pay for their groceries. They had used all their food stamps and needed \$95 so we paid it.

In both instances, we felt blessed to be able to help. We are thankful for the experience to participate in the FUMC Kingdom Assignment.

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Jim and Pam Sapienza

I received a note from Maura Morris from East Franklin Elementary School in regards to our Kingdom Building donation that Pam and I made. I am sure our donation will go far in the development of these young students.

We thank Norm & Rose Farrell for inspiring us to use our Kingdom Building Money for this cause as they also did the same with their donations. I know that there are many needs in our community, but the lives of these young students is where we felt the Lord was leading us.

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Dick Schmidt

The decision of where my Kingdom Assignment funds should go was rather easy. CareNet has been high on my list of charitable organizations for years. The only question was what would be the best manner of passing along this blessing. I was so moved by the generosity of our church leadership that I matched God's money with some I have been blessed to have.

When our grocery stores offered "Buy One Get One Free" sales on basic food items, I emptied the shelves until a shopping cart was full. I did this a couple of times. Both times I not only purchased a couple hundred dollars' worth of groceries for CareNet, I also had an opportunity to share the Kingdom Assignment story with fellow shoppers who were curious about a cart filled to the top with canned goods, cereal, pasta and other groceries. In both cases a few others at the store felt it was something that they too would do.

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Nancy Scott

When I got my \$100, I was excited and surprised like everyone else and prayed that God would direct me in making a positive difference.

I thought of all the ways it could be put to good use, but I also did not want to give it to a cause that I already gave to on my own. So that eliminated children, women, science, conservation, church missions, and other deserving causes.

I attended a local program about the opioid addiction in Macon County given by the Full Circle Recovery Center and wanted to learn more. I made an appointment to talk to the head of the program and learned more about the growing problem of addiction and how it is treated as a criminal offense and moral failing... usually jail time, not treatment. One of the issues that make the problem even worse is the multiple use of needles by various users and the growing problem of acute Hepatitis C, which has increased 400% between 2000 to 2015. This increase has largely been caused by use of dirty needles by drug users.

So I doubled by Kingdom money and gave \$200 to the center to buy clean needles. I learned that clean needles can help stop the spread of Hepatitis C and also HIV.

I pray for these people caught in the web of drug addiction and abuse... and support treatment and harm reduction over incarceration.

The Kingdom Assignment has helped me to pause before judging others and to try to put myself in someone else's shoes. It has helped me realize that we all have the potential for both light and shadow, self-care and self-harm, connection and separation. And sometimes we make bad decisions. Love and forgiveness can give hope.

Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other. Just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Many thanks to our church for trusting us to use God's money to make a difference. What an amazing experience this has been for us and for those touched by our gifts!

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Deb Seidel

Having received \$100.00 from the church, I had my own plans on what I wanted to do. However, God had other plans for me. Seemed like I hit a road block at every turn when trying to do things 'my way.' God laid on my heart to help someone in our community who is an alcoholic and a diabetic. With this money, this person will receive a very nice Christmas this year, with groceries, a gift, and God's message of Love.

First United Methodist Church is such a "Giving Church." This person will be informed how generous our church is and to remember "Paying it Forward" does work! Helping others grow strong in Jesus! Trusting God's plans for our lives.

Thank you, church family, for the opportunity to share in God's love!

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Wilber Seidel

I decided to invest my \$100 to try and increase it for the church in their work for God. I chose a large North Carolina bank, Bank of America (BAC) to invest the \$100 in their stock.

9/11/17 – Bought 4.263 shares (BAC) at \$23.46 per share (\$100).

I believe BAC is a good bank that will grow in the future and increase its dividends. Three months is a short time for a stock investment but I felt that it would show growth.

9/29/17 – BAC paid a \$.12 quarterly dividend.

11/6/17 – Sold 4.263 shares at \$27.75 per share.

Return on investment:

11/6/17 – Sold 4.263 shares at \$27.75 per share = \$118.29

9/11/17 – Bought 4.263 shares at \$23.46 per share = 100.00

Quarterly Dividend: 4.263 shares x \$0.12 per share = 0.52

Total Gain 18.81

For the period, the gain was 18.81% and had grown to \$118.81

I believe BAC will grow to at least \$35 per share in the next 3-6 months or increase the \$100 to about \$150.

I enjoyed the challenge of the slaves in Matthew 25:14-30 being given talents (\$100) to see what kind of return each of us could produce. I believe this investment will grow to \$150 in less than a year and, thus being optimistic, I will help it grow to \$200. Therefore, I am enclosing a Kingdom Assignment check for \$200. Thank you for the opportunity.

After hearing Reverend Freeman's discussion of her proposed project to develop education materials, assistance activities and support to grandparents raising grandchildren, I would like my Kingdom Assignment project investment to support her work. Grandparents who find themselves raising grandchildren, for whatever reason, often have to face challenges for which they could use some direction or help.

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Janet Sharp

There is a Christian organization called Samaritan's Purse. The primary purpose of its many ministries is to spread the Gospel. One of those ministries is named Operation Christmas Child. They ask people to donate shoe boxes filled with toys, games, personal hygiene items or school supplies that they then ship to many places in the world where the people are in need of hearing the message of salvation. They request \$9 per box to pay for shipping. This fee is not only used to transport the boxes but to print and distribute a brightly colored Bible story book. The children are offered the opportunity to take a 12-week Bible study course. When they complete the lessons, they receive a New Testament written in their native language.

I will use the Kingdom Assignment \$100 to send 11 boxes. I am deriving pleasure from selecting and purchasing suitable items to put in those boxes. When I take the filled shoe boxes to my church in Florida on collection Sunday in November, I will be sending them on their way to their destination with my prayer that the recipients will know that Jesus loves them and that they will accept Him as their personal Savior. I will continue to pray for these children that they will take the Bible study classes and will grow in their faith and share the good news of salvation with their families and friends.

This is a follow-up report on my Kingdom Assignment. As indicated in my first report I am using the \$100 to pay the shipping cost for Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes. I purchased items to fill 12 boxes. I concentrated on boys in the 10 to

14 age range. Six of the boxes contain a hammer, assorted sizes and types of nails, and a tape measure. Three of the boxes contain fishing hooks, flies, line, sinkers, and bobbers. All nine of the boxes for older boys contain the following:

Wash cloth, soap with a plastic bag, toothbrush, comb, socks, bandana, two pens, four pencils, pencil sharpener, eraser, two paper tablets, solar pocket calculator, scissors, 12 pack of colored pencils, spinner, small bouncy ball, car, stickers, modeling clay, a game (either checkers, dominos, Yahtzee, or Tic-Tac-Toe), playing cards (either Rummy, Hearts, or regular deck), and a small stuffed animal.

I also filled three boxes for two four-year-old boys. They contained the following items: wash cloth, soap with a plastic bag, toothbrush, socks, expandable "magic towel", stuffed animal, inflatable beach ball, coloring book, crayons, play dough, shaped play dough cutters, whistle, train or car, and rubber bath toy. The remaining items varied from one box to another. Each box contained two or more of the following choices: nesting cups, cat ball with bell inside, wooden shapes puzzle, lacing cards, "magical writer" erasable board, or shovel.

These boxes will be taken to my church in Leesburg, Florida, on November 12 to be added to those that other members of the congregation have brought for collection Sunday. Then the boxes will be sent to Samaritan's Purse to be distributed.

This is a further follow-up on my Kingdom Assignment. A friend of mine used her computer to go on-line to the Samaritan's Purse website to print shipping labels for me so that my boxes could be tracked. She recently told me she had received an e-mail indicating that my boxes had gone to Chad and Angola.

The attached photograph was taken at the front of the sanctuary of First Baptist Church in Leesburg, Florida, after the worship services on collection Sunday. The parishioners contributed 1,387 shoe boxes this year for Operation Christmas Child.

God has blessed me to be a part of this ministry in a small way.

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Ed and Jane Shatley

Jane and Ed Shatley are season ticket holders for the Carolina Panthers football team. They decided to sell two tickets to the Carolina Panthers vs. Philadelphia Eagles game online. They raised a good sum, matched by the Kingdom Assignment money and gave \$600 to Rise Against Hunger.

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Karen Sheehan

In reference to the fall "Kingdom Assignment," I've got to say it's amazing to hear the stories so far. Because I'm in no way impulsive, I was unable to jump up and rush forward with our fellow parishioners that day of the call. But that doesn't mean we ALL weren't moved by the challenge. I chose to invest in a young man's future, a much longer term than short term investment, and I expect big dividends!

There's a young man back in our hometown that made a terrible mistake when he was just 16. He was arguing with his father and in a moment of anger, he lashed out with a knife instead of words. Due to the seriousness of offense, he ended up in juvenile detention and was then transferred to prison when he turned 18. He's now 21, recently released and going through the reentry process of making amends with his family, beginning a new, adult life. Of course, he's now a felon and that makes his path that much more difficult.

This young man grew up in the Church, is from a good family but that one night changed the course of his entire life. I've sent him a note of encouragement with a financial commitment to help with initial needs, explained the Kingdom Challenge and why I chose him. My commitment is also to send him a note every so often so he understands this is not a one-time contact. Only time will tell how well my investment will grow and spread. Thank you for the challenge!

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Jim and Nancy Shope

I (Nancy) knew soon after receiving \$100 of God's money what I was going to do with it. I have always had a heart for stray animals so I decided to do a fundraiser for Appalachian Animal Rescue. I did my fundraiser on Facebook. I have been blessed to have many people make donations...some of them I did not even know. I raised \$1,200 on Facebook (\$200 was the \$100 plus I added \$100 to it) and received \$185 in additional donations made directly to me. Also, I am adding another \$60 to make up for the 5% fee that Facebook keeps.

It is amazing what can come from \$100!

May God richly bless everyone who contributed!

Jim added \$100 to the \$100 he received from the church (God's money) and donated to two fundraisers...one for a family who had a death in the immediate family and someone started raising funds to help them with expenses and one to help someone who had an illness with many related expenses. He is thankful for the opportunity to be able to help these people.

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Part I: A Tap on my shoulder (or a gentle shove in the back)

About a month before our Kingdom Assignment, I was standing in line at the Walmart Customer Service Desk waiting to ask a question on a gift I was buying for my Granddaughter. I was next in line behind a young man in his twenties who was standing at the desk. I could not help but overhear his conversation with the clerk. He was trying to cash a check and the clerk was having a hard time getting it to go through. She had tried a couple of times already. A woman pushing a cart with a baby in it and some groceries already bagged came from the cashier where she had been waiting for the man to come back with the money to pay. As they stood there, the clerk finally said that they would have to go to the bank to cash the check (it was already 6:00pm). They begin handing the clerk the groceries out of the cart to put behind the counter. That is when God spoke to me “Step up there!” Timidly, I stepped up and said, “I would like to pay for your groceries if you will let me.” Of course, he was so stunned and immediately gave me a big hug. As I was paying for the groceries, the woman who was standing in line behind me said “Ma’am, Ma’am.” As I turned she said, “I would like to help too” and handed me a \$20 bill. I explained that I was paying with my debit card and asked if it was all right to give the money to the young man. “Of course!” she said. There were hugs all around and tears in eyes. What a wonderful God moment!

Part II: God’s Money

I felt like my experience at Walmart was definitely a Kingdom Assignment, so I decided that I wanted to use the \$100 for something else. I decided, after much prayer and trying too hard (yes, Pastor David, and stress!) that I would contribute it to UMCOR for disaster relief, especially due to the hurricanes. Last week in my 2:00pm water aerobics class, Bonnie Phillips yelled across the pool, “Hey Mary, do you still have your \$100?” That got everyone’s attention and they turned and looked at me. “Wow, do you have a \$100?” they asked. I replied, “It is not my money, it is God’s money.” That really got their attention and led to my explaining about the Kingdom Assignment. Well, my friends in my class took up a collection and doubled the money to UMCOR to \$200.00. What a blessing to have friends like that!

I was quite skeptical about how this assignment would turn out. But it sure has made me more aware of things that I can do to spread God’s word. I feel so blessed to have been a part of this.

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John and Sharon Stokes

We decided we wanted to keep our Kingdom Assignment money in Macon County. After much thought, we decided to give God's money to Macon Tracs...a nonprofit organization which provides equine-assisted activities involving grooming, feeding, haltering and leading a horse, supervised by a mental health professional. This therapy is used for young adults and children who have mental or physical disabilities.

We added \$100 to God's \$200 and gave \$300 in God's name to the Macon Tracs' scholarship fund, which helps families that cannot afford these services. This donation of God's money went to a family with a five-year-old child who was born with cerebral palsy. This family did not want to take charity, but the director felt they would accept this because it came from God.

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James, Ginger, Barrett, Clara and Lucy Stork

We chose to support hurricane relief through UMCOR for our Kingdom Assignment. Since our kids were very aware of the string of hurricane events that devastated Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico, we felt they would understand the need and connect with the purpose.

Our kids invited a few of their friends to participate with them in the assignment - which was to purchase the supplies necessary to make 15 hurricane relief buckets to deliver to UMCOR's regional center in Western North Carolina.

We got the kids together at our house and showed them the video on the UMCOR site, which goes over the supplies that are needed and how to pack them into the buckets. We also shared with them about the Kingdom Assignment and how we were using God's money to help others.

We printed out the supply lists and went to a couple of hardware stores and Walmart so the kids could shop for the supplies. This provided for a chance to teach the kids about looking for deals and getting the most value with the money, and also helped them learn what supplies are necessary for cleaning up after a natural disaster. This was a great experience for the kids - they were enthusiastic and excited to chip away at the list and find the items we needed.

While most of the supplies were collected that day, we wiped out the stock of some of the items at the stores and it took us another week or two to find the rest of the items locally or online.

We used our \$500, plus an additional \$200 donated to make our goal of 15 buckets.

This was a great experience for our family. We used it as an opportunity to teach the kids and their friends about using God's money for His Kingdom and how we can come together to help others in need.

We appreciate the church challenging us with the assignment.

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Alton and Rena Sutton

What happened at our church got Rena and me from the stage of talking about doing something to help others, to the stage of doing something. We were both handed a \$100 bill but when Pastor David asked who had not been given a \$100 bill, the lady beside me did not raise her hand but I heard her say, quietly, "I did not get a \$100 bill." So, I turned to her and gave her my \$100 bill since I knew Rena probably got one, which she did. I told the lady for her and her husband to do whatever they thought of with the \$100.

Rena and I decided to give the \$100 to help the people in Africa. Rena turned that money into the church last Sunday.

We talked about different ways to raise more money for missions. I decided to take up money, with the permission of FHS, at the Franklin-Swain football game. I will be turning that money into the church to give to UMCOR to assist people in the different states who have been affected by the hurricanes.

I also have another idea to raise even more money but I have to work out the logistics first. I will discuss this later if it works out.

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Scott and Cheryl Taylor

Scott and I were absent from church the Sunday the Kingdom Assignment was given. Janet Player phoned us and told us about the service, the parable, the Kingdom Assignment, and the overwhelming response by the congregation.

Initially, Scott and I were saddened that we had missed the service, but soon the Holy Spirit showed us that we too had a Kingdom Assignment. The money we were to use was the money we would have dropped into the offering plate had we been in church that Sunday.

We read and reread the parable, and we both prayed. I called Kathryn Sellers. She told us the three points of the assignment and suggested that we look at our gifts and passions for ideas.

Our first feeling was to donate our \$200 to UMCOR for hurricane relief. It was such an obvious need. After we did that, we both felt like our giving to the

Kingdom wasn't over. We asked God to show us another need where we could help.

My passion is reading books; but how could my love of reading help anyone else? Once again, I talked to Kathryn, and she suggested that I call Reach where I talked to the director. Andrea gave me the guidelines under their grant money restrictions.

I was thrilled! I was on my home turf. My career as a public school English teacher had given me years of experience in choosing literature that is wholesome fiction with good, moral, life-lessons without being classified under the genre of didactic Christian literature. (Reach does accept Christian literature, but those books must go in a separate place that is set aside for Church information and pamphlets.)

I chose books whose themes were trust, perseverance, faith, friendship, loving others who are unlike ourselves, and forgiveness. I donated nineteen books.

Reach was happy to receive them and said that their grant will match my donation.

What I learned is that our Kingdom Assignment is not a one-time deal; rather, it is a lifetime mindset. Also, our giving doesn't have to be in increments of \$100.

Scott and I are delighted to plan our purchase of future books that we want to give to the moms and children at Reach: books that will encourage them and will hopefully develop in them the love of reading.

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Jaiden Vanhook

I used my money to donate to Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center. Tiffani, my stepmom, matched it and we gave them two hundred dollars to go toward wherever they needed it the most.

I have always felt led to help others, especially babies. I am hoping to pursue a career as a NICU nurse, so I knew when that monetary gift was handed to me exactly where God wanted me to spend it. Many of you don't know where or what the Center is. They are located in a very small building next to CareNet thrift store. They have a waiting room, one room where they can do ultrasounds, a counseling room, and a room where they have meetings and new moms can watch videos to earn "points". The points can go toward baby clothes, clothes for the mom, diapers, wipes and other things for the mother and baby. Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center offers options to the mother as to where to go next. Living next to a college town, you see many girls who get unexpectedly pregnant and don't get the proper care or help they need. Many chose the option of abortion because they think they can't raise a child or that abortion is the only solution.

There are over two million couples waiting to get the call that they can bring the child they have waited and prayed for home. Over 1.3 million abortions are performed each year due to thinking they couldn't do it or there were no other options. The highest reason is 25% are not ready for a child, and 23% can't afford one. Women ages 15-24 cover the 44.1% statistic of abortions performed. Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center is there to help girls find other Christian options. They are looking to buy a house right next to WCU, so they can help bring the number down and show girls there are more options. I donated my money to this organization, because I feel like they are making a HUGE difference in girls' lives to further fulfill God's purpose for life.

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Tiffani Vanhook

As I pondered and prayed over where God would use my monetary gift, several options crossed my mind. Jaiden (my stepdaughter) didn't hesitate. She knew exactly what she wanted to do. As we left church that day, she said Tiff I want this to be given to help babies. I thought, "Wow". To be so sure and confident, I assured her we would make that possible, but I wanted her to pray and earnestly spend time thinking about this. So after long thought and prayer and time with God, things just fell into place. We met a lady at the fair who informed us of some plans for the Pregnancy Care Center and their recent goal in purchasing a building next to Western's college campus in Cullowhee. I then shared with my husband that I felt God pulling at my heart strings to support Jaiden's decision. So later that week I called the Pregnancy Center and spoke with a very helpful nurse who was excited to hear of the opportunity. I went on to explain that I didn't want Jaiden to just donate the monetary donation; I would also like for her to be able to donate some of her time. The nurse was tickled to hear that and more than willing to set up a time for Jaiden to come in. I believe this experience opened both of our eyes to the definite need for support of this wonderful Christian foundation. God truly blessed our hearts as we discussed the Kingdom Assignment and spent many hours in prayer as to where He would have us use our gift.

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Tatem Vanhook

Now, on to my little one, Tatem. We talked a lot about this being God's money, and we needed to seek His Will for where He would have us to spend it. One evening she came to Rod and I and said I know where I would like to spend my \$100. We then questioned where Tatem wanted to spend it. What happened next overjoyed our hearts so very much. "I would like to give my money to my Aunt Brenda, she does so much for me and everyone else." Rod and I both teared up

and thought how profound for our little girl to understand gratitude and selflessness. So, with grateful hearts we encouraged Tatem to make Aunt Brenda a Thank You card and explain why this is where she decided to spend God's gift. Of course, Brenda was overjoyed, and her initial response was, "I don't have the money to pay it forward," which allowed us to explain that it is not always about the money. "You give of yourself so generously we wanted to share our gratitude."

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Bill and Jeanne Vaughters

One fine Sunday morning Jeanne and I came to church. We had been told by David not to miss this Sunday so we were there wondering just what it was all about. Toward the end of the service, David asked that we all come to the front of the church. Most of us did, however Jeanne was a bit apprehensive and did not.

I guess some people knew what was going to happen but we did not. Then we were all given a \$100 bill. What's this all about? David explained the pay it forward concept. I tried to get Jeanne to take a bill but she was apprehensive and did not.

On the way home we discussed what we were supposed to do. We disagreed. Jeanne thought we were to make the money grow and turn it back to the church; I thought we were supposed to make it grow if we could and do something worthwhile with it.

It took us a couple of days to agree that the latter was what we were to do. We also had heard that those that didn't take one of the bills could apply and perhaps get one. We did make that request on Jeanne's part. We did not hear back which was fine. The reason will be explained below.

Jeanne and I talked about what to do and agreed to donate to Hurricane relief and I suggested we match the amount and donate \$200. This is where the game changed. Now that Jeanne was onboard she wanted to do more. "How" I asked. "Well, let's get other people to donate," she replied. I said "OK, let's see if we can get a little more."

From this point on Jeanne was the brain behind what we did. She made a flyer to hand out at our bowling league and at the garden club that we belong to. She also approached family members to get donations. The Pay it Forward flyer is attached.

As a result of those actions we collected a total of \$625 dollars, which we hand carried to a Red Cross chapter. We also got a commitment from another family that did not want to donate to Red Cross but committed to send \$100 to the Salvation Army. That brought our total to \$725.

We were not finished. A couple of years ago Marti Patterson suggested that I donate a TI 84 plus graphing calculator to the early college to give to a student who might not have the money to buy it. These calculators are a must in High School and College Mathematics. Also, being a retired Math Professor, I got one for myself because it is a fantastic instrument. My intention of course was to keep it. However, I have a grandniece who is in high school and she didn't have one. I lent her mine with the understanding I would get it back when they could afford to buy one. But the whole pay it forward thing caught up with me. I went to her and asked for the calculator back. She was disappointed of course but she did understand it was borrowed. When she gave it to me, I said I wanted it back so that I could officially give it to her and it was now fully hers and handed it to her. She is an A student in math and I am very proud of her.

While in Florida and staying at a daughter's house who is a High School math teacher, and who donated to our project, I told her about the calculator that I gave to our niece. She thought that was great, then she went into the other room and brought out an older version of the same calculator, a TI83 Plus that does essentially the same thing with just a few less bells and whistles. She gave the calculator to me to keep. She paid it forward. This has been a wonderful experience for our family. Thank you so much for bringing this way of providing a service to anyone in need.

Pardon the length of this story but in summary.

Donated to Red Cross	\$625
Pledged to Salvation Army	\$100
Calculator to Deserving Student	\$100
For a Total of.....	\$825

And if you add the calculator back to me from my daughter, add another \$100 for a total of \$925.

A couple of things, the value of the calculators is estimated and rounded to \$100. The actual values would be slightly more for the 84plus and slightly less for the 83plus.

Back to the second \$100 we requested for Jeanne, we decided not to follow up because that would not have created any increase in our project except to add \$100 and perhaps another person may have gotten the money and used it to make things even better.

I am so proud of Jeanne but not surprised. She started skeptically but really got on board and most of the fund raising was her idea.

One last thing, we did not count our donation to Shop With A Cop as we do that annually anyway. However, we would encourage any donations to this worthwhile program.

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Mike Vincent

After I recovered from the initial shock of being handed a brand new one-hundred-dollar bill and was told to pay it forward, it took me all of another five minutes to determine what I was going to do with it.

Twenty hours later, as I pulled into the parking lot where I volunteer, I saw the person that I intended to give the money to help me pay it forward. He was walking around in small circles, first looking up then looking down. I thought he was smoking but I soon found out he was praying.

A little history will help. He is a young single father with two young boys, a very committed Christian and whose oldest son had just received a full scholarship to Rabun Gap Nacoochee School. The father was elated but at the same time distraught because the scholarship, although it covered full school expenses, did not cover uniforms, which cost several hundred dollars initially, but often ran into much more as young boys tend to grow.

I could tell by the look in his eyes he was very distraught, distressed or whatever word fit him best, or worst. I asked him if he was familiar with the parable in Matthew regarding the master and three slaves. He also had seen the movie about paying it forward and he said he did.

I got out the money and told him this was the start of that process. I could tell he was holding back tears, mostly of joy.

He hugged me.

With that hug and that look, I knew I had picked the right person to do what the Master wanted his slaves to do.

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Denny and Bonnie Wallace

Our donation was made to the Christian Ministry in the National Parks.

We chose CMNP for all the years we camped with our family in our National Parks.

On Sunday morning there were and still are services in the Park Amphitheater; sermons were given by young interns from all around the nation.

On Saturday evening the interns would come around the campground to invite families who were sitting around the evening campfire to the services the next morning. They sometimes had a prayer with the family.

Although this did not make more money, we feel it is an investment in young lives.

To worship in God's beautiful "outside" church is always so peaceful...so awesome.

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Harold and Betty Warstler

I, Harold, took \$100.00 for a Kingdom Assignment and matched it. I gave the money to Bill Hubler for his upcoming Honduran mission trip, and the money will be used to purchase medicine needed by the local people.

Betty also felt led to match her \$100.00, which she donated to the "Well in a Weekend" project sponsored by the River of Life Ministry led by the Reverend Wayne Dickert, who was a member of our church prior to going into the ministry.

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Suzanne Watson

"This I do in remembrance of you" has more than one meaning to me. Right after the Kingdom Assignment at church, I was walking my dogs and was drawn to a neighbor's yard. Last year my neighbor's best friend's boyfriend committed suicide. I messaged her and her best friend and told them about the Kingdom Assignment and that Vince and I wanted to pay it forward and get them each a tree to plant in his memory and for suicide awareness.

Later that day, I was playing with my small little mother hens and chicks succulents and thinking about my father. I thought how much joy they bring me and that it would make residents in nursing homes smile if everyone could receive a plant. I started pulling little chicks and put them in small containers and sold them in my salon. Then I started purchasing more plants and containers from local thrift shops and put together some cute arrangements. I gave some clever names, such as "Harry Potter Goblet of Goodness," a beach scene called "Jamaican Me Crazy with your Succulents," complete with shells from Jamaica and some Jurassic Park ones complete with dinosaurs because a young kid was amazed at my large fairy garden in the shop and said he wanted a Jurassic Park one. Roberta Swank donated a few of her "chicks," so they were called "Roberta's Swanky Chic's" and "Roberta's Hot Chic's."

Every night for weeks these plants became my life. I ordered post cards and stickers to help promote my “Let Love Grow” campaign. I turned my one “talent” into ten. And, it’s going to keep on going and “growing!”

Vince and I, along with help from Laurel Fleming, Sharon Archer and Sherrie Worley, delivered plants to Franklin House, Macon Valley and Grandview nursing homes. The Alzheimer’s units were not allowed to have them, so I am trying to think of something special to do for them. Everyone loved them, and it was wonderful to see all the smiles. I lost my father in February, and my friend Sherrie lost her father this year, too. Coming to help me do this was healing for Sherrie; she’d been pretty down this year. It was also healing for me and got me out of my own personal “pity party.” I plan to keep this going if I can and take plants at least twice a year to the nursing homes.

In addition to the nursing homes, “Let Love Grow” has helped two local benefits with plants, given plants to people going through life challenges, and given trees away for suicide awareness. The Let Love Grow campaign helps the AARC thrift shop, Habitat and Reach. I plan on taking plants next year to residents of Methodist Manor in Florence, SC, in memory of my father.

If anyone knows someone who needs a little love, contact me, and I will be glad to give them a little love in a plant. Special thanks to Vince Barone for all his work in this. I could not have done it without him. I appreciate the help of the Sophisticut staff for helping promote my fundraiser, as well as people who donated to the fundraiser or purchased plants. It is still going on so come by and Let Love Grow!



Barbara Wike

On August 27th at FUMC I received \$100.00 to further God's Kingdom. I was a little overwhelmed and not sure where God's money should go. I doubled my \$100.00 and found myself drawn to the Appalachian Humane Society. I have had so many special dogs in my life, and I knew they could use my help. My Kingdom Assignment has caused me to look all around and say, "How can I help?" There is so much that needs to be done to help people and animals.

I hope my Kingdom Assignment becomes a way of life for me, not just a one - time event.

Thank you FUMC for an eye opening experience.

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Bob Williams

The Sunday morning that I received my assignment \$100 bill I was feeling excited, probably not unlike many members of the congregation. The initial excitement of receiving the money and all the possibilities it represented quickly waned as I considered the magnitude of the needs of our world, nation and community. Could it even make a dent? Another, somewhat selfish feeling crept in, as well. Mary and I were about financially and perhaps emotionally given out. There was no way that we would supplement this gift with any of our own money. Yes, we still had a "nest egg" that could, in the future, finance that trip to the Holy Land, twice postponed due to illness in the family. Also, there was the "need" to replace, what must be the smallest television set in Macon County. In this way the journey toward completion of the assignment was beginning with a firmly set ground rule that it would only include "God's money." At this point Mary and I were still looking at this assignment as a joint venture, the way we approach most everything else in our lives.

Within a few days, we seemed to be surrounded by natural disasters and the very real human disasters they brought. Along with the stories of tragedy there were dozens of reports of neighbors in these areas banding together in the most Christ-like of ways. There was the helicopter pilot who flew through dangerous crosswinds amid high tension power lines, requiring incredible focus to rescue families. All the while, he didn't know the fate of his own family and home lying in an area known to be under 10 feet of water. Also, I couldn't imagine the emotional toll on the 911 operator in Houston who worked a 24-hour shift taking hundreds of calls. Finally, she got someone to relieve her and got a ride home. Finding her house and car completely destroyed, she hitchhiked back to work to continue

coordinating rescues. Maybe, we realized, we already were in the “Holy Land” after all. We sent a check from savings and kept the \$100 bills for another day. After all, if you sit closer to your television, it looks much larger.

At this point the Lord began to call to us as individuals. I began to look around at the people I could observe on a daily basis. As in the experience of working in a homeless shelter years ago, I began to see the poor around me as not very different than myself. First and foremost, they were children of God. The bill, although still in my pocket, was at work changing me. As Mary heard the calm voice of the Lord through the pain of her shattered ankle telling her what her mission was to be, my path was made to cross that of a former student in need. That unmarried teenager decided, through the call of the Holy Spirit and the dedicated efforts of the Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center, to fight her demon of addiction and bring her unborn child to birth. Along with the celebration of the birth of our Savior next month, she will bring her own son into this world wrapped in \$100 worth of clothes and equipment from God. Can one child change the world? One changed mine. Praise be to Him.

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Mary Williams

When I first received the \$100 bill into my hands that Sunday, it was strongly linked to the pronouncement that it was God’s money. As a result, it caused me to be more selective and to be more discerning in how I would use that money, in how I could help to further God’s kingdom here on Earth. Various possibilities came into view but I felt that my (our) personal money should be used for those intentions. As I (and Bob) tried to decide how I would use the money, we found ourselves being more generous with our personal funds before spending God’s money.

For me, the cause that this \$100 would go to revealed itself the evening of Oct 11 after I had fallen off the ladder in our apple orchard and, in the words later of my orthopedist, had “wrecked” my ankle joint. That night, my mind kept replaying how comforting the volunteer fire & rescue first-responders had been as I lay on the ground. Personally, I’ve always had a calling to be a caregiver type but this first-responder gentleman was a community volunteer who responded to his neighbors who were in crisis. It was on a whole other plane of care giving that I had not ever really thought about. I remembered the many times I had encountered the volunteer first-responders, when I had called them for friends and neighbors of ours over the past five years. I had appreciated their services but soon forgot about them. But now, I could see the Christ-like ministering that they did with all who called them, how they came when we needed them most. They deserve to be recognized and to be supported in their work.

So, I sent them God’s money. I also wrote them a personal check for the same amount. I wrote a letter to the editors of the Franklin Press, The Macon County

News, and the Highlander to relay my story and to encourage community support for all of the Volunteer Fire & Rescue departments in our county. I know for certain that the letter was published in at least two of the publications with a follow up editorial piece in the Franklin Press. I do hope that it garnered more financial support for them but I feel that it did increase the awareness of their importance in our communities, of ministering to those in need.

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Ron and Billi Winecoff

We took our \$200, added \$300, and donated \$500 to the Puerto Rico recovery.

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FUMC Youth Group

When the Youth were given \$5000 to do the Kingdom Assignment as a group, we were really excited about the chance to do something big. However, we wanted to really think and pray about it, and not rush into a decision.

We decided right away we all wanted to not only donate funds to something, but actually "do" something to help the Kingdom.

For several weeks we studied the parable of the talents and did a lectio divina (sacred reading) of the passage. At our youth group meetings for about a month we had a chance to suggest ideas and then we narrowed them down to 5 and then voted:

The different projects were:

- hurricane/flood relief either in Texas, Florida or South Georgia
- going back to Morningstar in South Georgia (where we painted the bike shed, etc. this past summer) and helping both with the children and building/painting projects, as well as donating some recreation equipment
- Lighthouse Family Retreat and help children with cancer and their families with activities
- Heifer Project and going to one of their global villages and being involved in both their educational programs and service projects related to hunger and poverty
- sponsoring a child either through World Vision or Compassion International

We then voted and the first place winner was hurricane relief in Florida. However, the other projects were very close behind and we decided to send money to each of the projects, with an ongoing commitment to sponsor a child each month through Compassion International. We are purchasing a goat through Heifer

International and recreation equipment for Morningstar a therapeutic residential home for teenagers, and making a donation to Lighthouse Family Retreat for Children with cancer.

We are excited about being able to further God's Kingdom in all these ways, and look forward to our mission trip this summer as we work on houses that were affected by Hurricane Irma! We will still be doing some fundraising projects to raise the rest of the cost of the mission trip.

Thank you for giving us this incredible opportunity! We have learned more about listening to God, using what God has given us to help others, and realizing that there are many ways we can help.

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Steve and Jo Ann Yust

Like everyone else, I was overwhelmed when given the \$100 bill that Sunday. It really didn't take long before I felt moved towards giving it to the American Red Cross for relief efforts for the hurricane in Texas. At the time Walmart said they would match any funds so that did it; the American Red Cross would get \$200.

We are big supporters of CareNet here locally and wanted to help them as well. Steve gave his \$100 towards their efforts to feed the hungry right here in Macon County. Sometimes the number of hungry people here locally can be overwhelming and hopefully this \$100 could be doubled just by being used by CareNet.

We have been impressed with all the ideas the congregation has come up with since then. Wow, God's mighty power is unfailing. I look forward to hearing even more ways the \$100 has been used and sometimes even maybe tripled in "value."

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Anonymous

Having already donated my assignment money, I want to relate how it changed my life. While in grocery store this am, noted a couple buying carefully. With "mama" in pajama pants it was easy to be quietly critical. Daddy was very attentive to toddler and checking prices and buying the BOGO's. After following them up several isles, it seemed that God was giving me a nudge, remembering the years my husband was in doctorate school with one child living on my salary. I followed them through the check-out paying for their groceries that will probably last two weeks. They were in tears and the lady said "what was a bad day turned out really good. Many hugs on their part but more satisfaction on mine.

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Anonymous

After a little reflection, I came to realize that God didn't just give us \$100.00. And, he didn't just give us our "talents." He has given us the very breath of life; every moment of our miraculous being is a gift from God, meant to be used as a blessing to others in fulfillment of His purpose for our life. The Kingdom Assignment is our great commission to live out our lives as the very hand and feet and heart of God. That is a tall order with an eternal reward.

No one that I know exemplifies the urgency of living a life for the glory of God so much as Patti McClure and David Beam. Ms. Patti's new heart has driven her to expressions of great thankfulness for a second chance to keep on living, and a great call to others to do likewise. David Beam has remained faithful to God through a most trying time, and he has used each moment of tribulation to commune with God and seek His purpose—so that he can share that with his flock and his wife.

I am using the funds I received to support "Hope on the Mountain" because it is the vision of these two disciples who inspire me greatly. I am matching the funds I received with my own, and I have reached out to several people that I know and respect with a call for them to support the event as well. So far, no one has declined the call, and the total amount of support to date exceeds \$6,000.00.

THE END

(for now)